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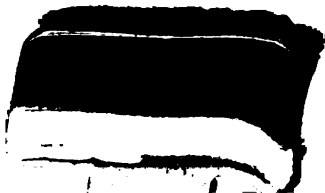
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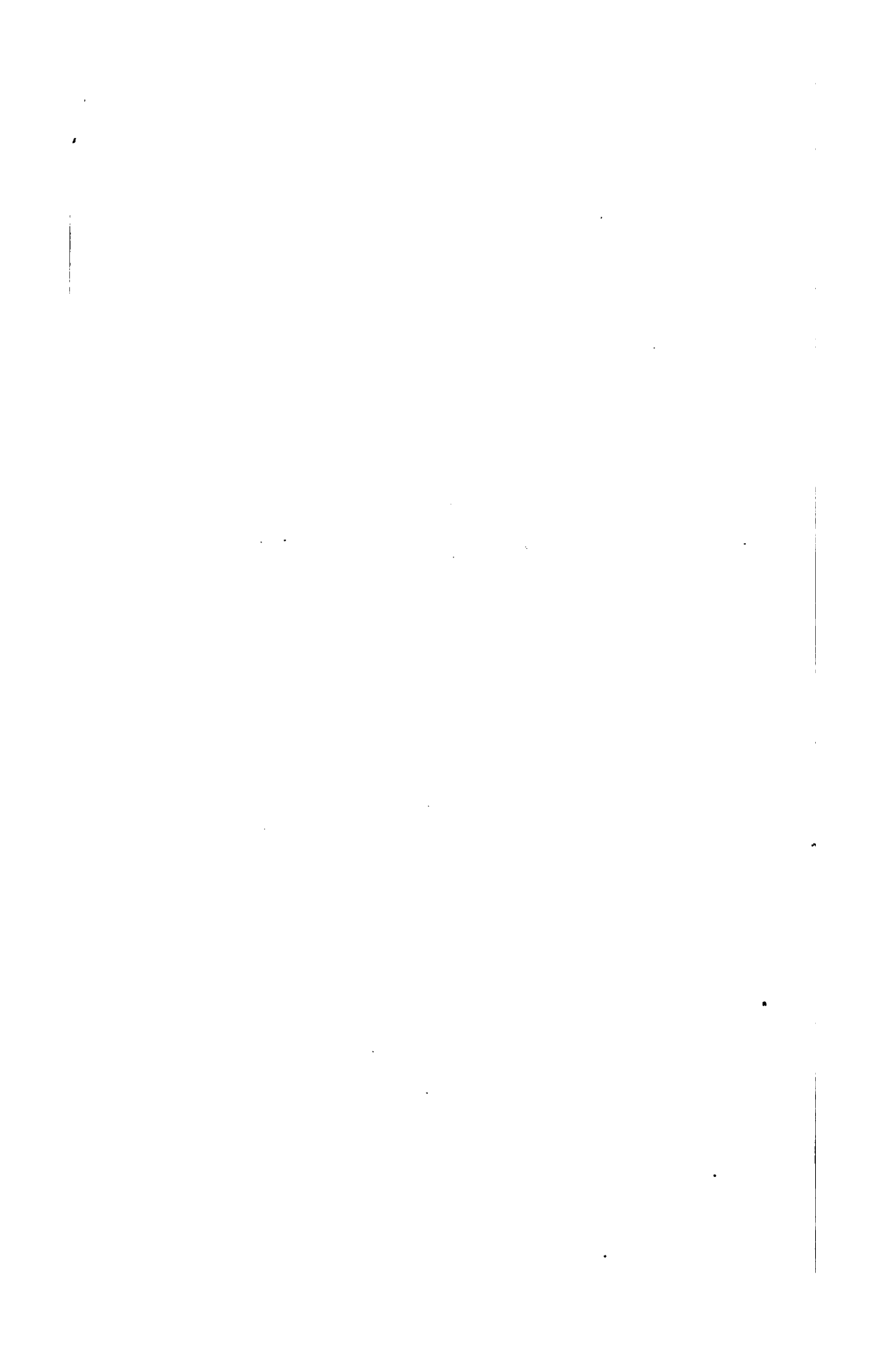
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ESSAYS TOWARDS A NEW THEOLOGY

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ESSAYS
TOWARDS
A NEW THEOLOGY

BY
ROBERT MACKINTOSH, B.D.
AUTHOR OF 'CHRIST AND THE JEWISH LAW'

GLASGOW
JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS
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1889

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PREFACE.

THE following essays are to be regarded as a continuation of the argument begun in two pamphlets, entitled respectively *The Obsolescence of the Westminster Confession of Faith*, and *The Insufficiency of Revivalism as a Religious System*. As some misapprehension has existed regarding the connection in which these two discussions were to be taken, I may now explain that the first-mentioned pamphlet was of primary importance to the writer. I had to deal with revivalism, because I wished to criticise theology. The pamphlet on the Confession was written to remind the Christian public what a new world human thought has entered since the days of the Westminster Assembly. Especially these four changes were dwelt on, viz., Toleration, the Apologetic movement, the Evangelical Revival, and the rise of a scientific Biblical interpretation¹ and Biblical Theology. These vast changes seemed to

¹ In a courteous letter of criticism, with which I have been favoured by Professor Candlish, he points out that I have misapprehended (*Obsolescence*, p. 47) the meaning of Confession 1. § ix. It is 'the full and true *sense* of any Scripture' which it says 'is not manifold but one.' The Confession means to deny the Roman Catholic doctrine of a multiple sense. I am sorry to have supported a somewhat vehemently expressed censure by so maladroit a citation.

warrant one in asserting that any seventeenth century Confession must be obsolete.

This inference, however, fell to the ground, if one accepted the claims of revivalism. If religious life is summed up in the miracle of regeneration, then God is 'sovereign' indeed, and the moralities of life are the small dust of the balance. Hence I found it necessary to argue, that even the revivalist form of Calvinism, though the only form of Calvinism possessing much vitality at the present day, does not hold the field as a system which generates an adequate religious experience. And I may here remark, that few persons seem to me to realise the 'vigour and rigour' of the revivalist theory. It is an anti-social system; and if we go on playing with edged tools, we are likely to get ugly wounds.

Those who read the following essays will, I trust, grant the premises which the pamphlets were meant to make good,—that neither orthodoxy nor revivalism furnishes us with a tenable theology.

Readers must not, however, assume that I use 'new theology' in Delitzsch's sense, as meaning 'Ritschlianism.'¹ I thankfully admit my obligations to Ritschl, but yet feel it necessary to make my own 'essays' towards a more fully Christian theology. Another writer to whom I owe much is M'Leod Campbell. And he has curious affinities with Ritschl. Any one acquainted with Ritschl's brilliant revision of the doctrine of Christ's 'two estates and three offices' will be almost startled, on looking into the Table of Contents of Campbell on the Atonement, to see how the same thought operates there—'Christ's dealing with man on the part of God' being distinguished from 'Christ's dealing with God on behalf of men,' in regard to both the retrospective and the prospective

¹ See below, p. 166.

aspects of the Atonement.¹ So too Campbell's doctrine of faith (p. 333: 'Faith is the right attitude of the human spirit towards God—the due response to His revelation of Himself to us, in rendering which our hearts are right with God. "Justification by faith alone" means that in pronouncing us just God regards only and exclusively the attitude of our spirits towards Himself. What elements will be present in the response of faith must depend on the elements present in the revelation of God to which it is a response')—this comes very near Ritschl's view (*Rechtfertigung*, ed. 1. iii. p. 92: 'When the faith, which corresponds to justification, is put in exercise, it terminates upon God only; and, as it is called out by God through the Atonement, it does not justify us by means of its independent value, as an act of the human mind, but as the act, by which man's entire dependence on God in the matter of justification is religiously acknowledged and practically acted upon'). Finally, Campbell's proposition, that 'the Atonement is a development of the Incarnation' (p. 122), corresponds—with significant differences—to Ritschl's 'doctrine of Christ's person or work' (p. 362). Campbell has not raised the question, whether the doctrine of Christ's person is exactly what it ought to be if the Atonement is its interpretation. Ritschl has raised the question; but his re-statement of Christology is unsatisfying. I am bound to add, that Campbell's defective analysis (if so we may regard it) leads him into opposition to Ritschl's abstract dualism (if we may so describe Ritschl's views) of the religious and the moral aspects of Christianity. Campbell writes as follows (p. 193): 'The freedom from condemnation, in other words, the justification through being in Christ Jesus, spoken of [in Rom.

¹ These last terms are more peculiar to Campbell. In my copy (fifth edition) of the *Nature of the Atonement* the first phrase quoted from Campbell—line 1, under chapter vi.—is misprinted in the Table of Contents.

viii. 1], is clearly one with that cleansing by the blood of Christ, that purging of the conscience, on which I have dwelt so much; nor can it be at all separated from that "fulfilment of the righteousness of the law" in those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," which the apostle goes on to mention as the direct end which God has contemplated in sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as a sacrifice for sin, and so condemning sin in the flesh.' This is to Ritschl a 'quite apocryphal teleology' (p. 433)—the properly direct purpose, which God has in view in justifying sinners, being to grant them [the *religious* blessing of] eternal life, or a victory over the world. I have tried, in Chapters VII. and VIII. of Essay I., to introduce Ritschl's distinction without raising it to the level of an ultimate dualism.

The titles of the several Essays explain the connection in which they were studied. But, while this is so, I find that Essay II.—where there has had to be produced a sort of rapid sketch of Biblical Theology, from the point of view of eschatological doctrine—contains much discussion of the outside, or apologetic and critical aspects, of questions, with the heart of which one has been dealing in Essay I. If Essay I. seems to be too slight in its treatment of certain questions regarding the Gospels, may I hope that Essay II. will supply its deficiencies?

As a whole, the book is what its title indicates. It consists of endeavours after truth, not of mature disquisitions. Many books and much criticism will be needed to produce a new system of theology. But, when the Church is preparing to undertake creed revision, it is the right and duty of students of Scripture to offer such help as they can to the Christian thought of their time. I trust these Essays may prove of some service. And I think it will be admitted that they are fairly dominated by one point of view.

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Let me supply an omission, and subjoin a correction. On page 140—third line from foot—a reference should have been appended to *Rechtfertigung*, (iii. p. 524, § 60). And the view attributed (on p. 41, note 1) to Erskine's *Braxen Serpent* is far more plainly stated in his *Doctrine of Election* (1837; six years later).

R. M.

EDINBURGH, October 1839.

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I.

THE ATONEMENT MORALLY VIEWED.

I.

THE Atonement is hardly in strictness a Biblical term. At least, it is one belonging to the sacrificial ritual of the Old Testament more than to the doctrine of the New Testament. But it is the term which Christian theology has been accustomed to use for denoting *the work of Christ*; and, as such, there can be no objection to it. From its historical usage the word has unquestionably come to bear special reference to the conveyance of pardon through the death of Christ. We shall have, in the sequel, to indicate the high importance of both these solemn things—of pardon as the very centre of our Christian blessedness, and of the death of Christ as the very culminating point, the very holy of holies, in Christ's work. But, at the same time, we shall have to argue that it is necessary to place these things in their context. We shall argue against separating forgiveness from those other experiences which, along with it, make up the Christian life. We shall argue against separating the fact of Christ's death from the events and activities of His life, and especially against separating the fact of death from the spirit in which Christ both lived, and taught, and died.

And indeed orthodox theology is with us here. It too connects the life-long sufferings and death of Christ—regarding these as penalties due by mankind to God's broken law—with Christ's active obedience to the commandments of God's law. Both obedience and suffering, according to orthodox theology, were necessary in order to honour and satisfy the justice of God as His moral law reveals it. And, inasmuch as

this twofold honour paid to God's law proceeded from a Divine Being, orthodoxy recognises it as a righteous thing with God to crown the great merit of the obedient sufferer with special blessings, which overflow from Christ to His people. Christ had made it possible for God righteously to forgive sin ; and Christ had merited, on behalf of His elect, the gift of the Holy Spirit, who works omnipotently, irresistibly producing not only the faith which receives pardon, but the holiness which pleases God.

Such is, in outline, the Calvinistic theory of the work of Christ ; and the Lutheran theory is exceedingly similar. It is a very fairly sound and logically complete framework of Christian ideas. But, at the same time, its putting together is painfully formal. It rests ultimately on an unbiblical doctrine of supposed 'natural religion'—a supposed 'intuition' incapable of development or modification—that every sin must be followed by definite penalties, personal or vicarious. Its whole doctrine of God is forensic ; and the idea of Christ's Divine merit, by which we finally emerge out of the prison of legal formulæ into the sunny regions of grace, conducts us by a painfully awkward and tortuous path. Finally, the idea of irresistible grace, when interpreted with a crude literalism, is anything rather than helpful to faith. Where omnipotence begins, science ends. If an infinite quantity figures in our data, calculation is of no avail. Hence the dryness and unprofitableness of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as contained in text-books of theology. This error is common to all the Churches. Lutheran orthodoxy, it has been crushingly shown,¹ did not succeed in giving any coherent account of God's spiritual dealings with sinful men. And the High Church school, who drag in the doctrine of the Sacraments at this point, explain what is dim by what is absolutely opaque, and plunge headlong into a superstitious materialism.

I have said that the doctrine of irresistible grace has proved unfruitful. In consequence of this, Christian theology and

¹ Julius Müller, *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, tr. vol. ii. pp. 232, 233.

Christian experience have concentrated themselves round the thought of Christ's suffering the punishment of our sin. On this theme, both experience and theology have shown themselves copious, warm, and impressive. True, the Christ of orthodox theology might be little more than the symbol of a theological equation—my sin + Christ = righteousness. The living Person has been too often buried under doctrinal formulæ. But, in God's mercy, the personal Christ is apt to reassert His influence. However His gracious work is conceived, once the intellect has, somehow, conceived it, the current of the affections will often set towards the personal Saviour, drawn by His mercy, holiness, and redeeming power. Christ is thought of as saving us by freeing us from guilt. He is thought to free us from guilt by bearing our punishment. In effect, however, the personal influence of the historical Jesus does to a large extent enter into the religious life of evangelical people, often producing a very admirable type of purely individual piety. But this piety—the religious side of a devout Arminianism—is logically incoherent. Christ is conceived merely as the source of pardon. The other elements of the Christian salvation (holiness—the knowledge of God) are referred to God's abstract goodwill, or else are unaccounted for. But Christians are conscious of possessing whatever spiritual good they have by gift from Jesus Christ. And, if the Christian faith is ever again to be intellectually respectable—if it is ever again to be clothed in appropriate dogmatic forms—it must give a coherent account of this elementary Christian assumption. It will by no means suffice to say that the Holy Spirit directly saves men,—that Christ, the Saviour of the world, merely conducted necessary preliminary arrangements for the world's salvation. Perhaps few orthodox divines will go so far as a respected clergyman who, in conversation, advanced the position that, had God so willed, the Atonement of Jesus Christ might have been transacted on the planet Mars, if only 'authentic information' of the event had reached the earth. I do not indeed assert that it is impossible that some

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of God's reasonable creatures, not inhabitants of this earth, may be interested in Christ's atonement.¹ But plainly our own interest as men in Christ's work goes far beyond such bare knowledge of a possible means of forgiveness. Not for that merely did Christ tabernacle among us in human nature as the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. At the touch of a serious and reverent study of Christ's life recorded in the Gospels—at the touch of that life, the old dogmatic theology withers and falls to pieces. But, however unwilling the living representatives of orthodoxy may be either to confess what orthodoxy really amounts to, or to amend their own ways—still, if the Atonement is an 'arrangement,' faith can be nothing else than 'assent to that arrangement,' and the Gospel nothing else than 'authentic information' that such an 'arrangement' is open to us. Conversely, if faith is more than 'assent to' a substitutionary arrangement—if revelation is more than the verified announcement of such an arrangement—then the Atonement, the work of Christ itself, cannot be satisfactorily described in terms of criminal law.

The problem then is, how to conceive the work of Christ as conveying to men not only pardon, but spiritual knowledge and moral regeneration. What theologians have called the 'physical' working of grace must be connected with the Atonement, no less clearly than its 'forensic' results have been. Efforts have been made on these lines, or partially on these lines, in the past. Early in the history of the Reformation, A. Osiander protested against the forensic sense of justification (=acquittal) in this interest. Christ justifies, he maintained, by making us good. But when he went on to maintain that Christ makes us good by infusing into us His own eternal Divine righteousness as Logos, it became plain that Osiander had carried his speculations clean off the fruitful plains of experience and up to the barren heights of lawless fancy. I do not quote, as an earlier parallel to Osiander, the use of justification

¹ Eph. i. 10; Col. i. 20. Cf. Ewald, *Old and New Testament Theology*, tr. p. 346 n.

in a physical sense by Augustine and the mediæval theology. They did not, like Osiander, try to show that the saving transformation of man's nature is, in any proper sense, due to the working of the incarnate Christ. They were sacramentarians; their doctrine of grace was magical, or at the best mystical. In any case, it was intellectually unfruitful. When we come down to the modern upbreak or general thaw of the old theology, we find that some such treatment of the Atonement as we postulate is a note of all the innovators. Thus we find the suggestion that Christ's sacrifice was =resignation—the sacrifice of His will; or, as it is sometimes said, of self-will. We may take F. W. Robertson's name as characteristic of this view; though I do not know that he is guilty of the intellectual confusion implied in speaking of Christ sacrificing His self-will. A really self-willed being could not have been the world's Saviour. On the other hand, it is not apparent how ever so high and holy an instance of resignation should have power to impregnate with new life a whole race of sinners; nor yet is it apparent on the theory why Christ should so suffer as He did; nor yet is it apparent how this obedience of Christ 'unto death,' when so viewed, is connected with the forgiveness of sins in the way in which all Scripture and all experience affirm it to be. We are carried still further by Erskine¹—at one stage in his long, earnest, stimulating, but rather flighty and headstrong theological career—when he defines Christ's work as 'eating out the taint of sin from human nature.' This is a suggestive statement—perhaps fundamentally correct. But Erskine only works it out by asserting that Christ bears those consequences of sin which in us are of a penal character; that Christ and the human race are 'one colossal man'; and that God is *warranted* to pardon us by Christ's quasi punishment. Thus Erskine does not fulfil the promise of his own phrase. And, in his later theological career, his strong dogmatic universalism made him take less and less interest in the historical details of the Christian salvation. But Erskine's associate, about 1831—a stronger man,

¹ *Brasen Serpent.* 1831.

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who was more completely overbalanced by 'the tongues'—Edward Irving—went the whole way when he asserted the sinfulness of Christ's flesh. At first sight this seems *the way* to explain how Christ heals human sin. What could be more satisfying than that He should enter into the tainted nature in order to purify it? But so to think is to be misled by physical or physiological analogies. The process of salvation must be a moral process. That Christ becomes wicked, like us, in order that we may become holy, like Him, would be blasphemy if it were not nonsense. And the matter is not mended if it be explained that Christ's flesh never broke out into an act of sin. A tendency which produces no results is no tendency at all. And, if it were, a redeemed sample of sinful flesh would be a sample of flesh redeemed, but no pledge of salvation to others. What is here described is a way of redemption (unthinkable enough) which other men may copy, if they can; but if so, they will be saved like Christ—not by Christ. It is to be allowed that Christian men may adopt this theory in confusion of intellect; but the theory itself is neither Christian nor moral, nor even rational.

Accordingly, the ground may perhaps be considered clear¹

¹ Perhaps I ought to explain why M'Leod Campbell's book on *The Nature of the Atonement* is not characterised in the text. Certainly it is not from any want of reverence for Campbell, or from any failure to recognise the truth and beauty of what he has contributed to theology. There is nothing to add to his elucidation of the point, how we are to conceive our Lord's work as having had a value for God. Christ's response to the whole mind of God is the ultimate interpretation of His sacrifice, considered as an offering to God. Far too much has been made by Campbell's critics of the chance phrase 'repentance,' as applied to Christ. It is little more than an illustration of the author's meaning. But though Campbell recognises that 'what is an Atonement in Christ is Christianity in us'—so he strikingly expresses it—he does not appear to me to make any effort to show that the atonement is necessarily presupposed in the manifestations of our Christian life. And that is the problem of Christianity, considered as a religion. We are 'in Christ,' he says, as branches in the true Vine. Yes; but how is this oneness to be conceived? and what has the historical work of Jesus Christ contributed to it? Campbell's deep and strong but brooding intellect has failed to keep step with his eager mystical spirit.

Maurice reduces redemption to revelation, and to revelation of a metaphysical mystery, not of moral truths.

Bushnell's brilliant essays appear to me *parum ad rem*.

for a fresh attempt to show how the history of Jesus Christ, when studied by those who believe in Him as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, naturally explains itself as the process of the world's redemption—a process embracing first the knowledge of God, secondly pardon, thirdly comfort in sorrow, and finally moral renovation and the conquest of sin; all these things being seen in Christ both for individual believers and for the redeemed world. Our study of the subject in these pages must be a mere rapid sketch, intended to suggest rather than to demonstrate. And we shall be less anxious to make novel statements, however profound or however true, than to co-ordinate admitted truths which have too rarely been brought together in one systematic utterance of Christian thought. In the first place, we shall study Christ as seen in His life and in His death. Secondly, we shall study Christ's religious value, as seen in the faith of New Testament times and in our own. The first test of a doctrine of the Atonement is, that it should account for the facts of history as understood by faith, *i.e.* for the life and sufferings, the death and resurrection of One who was the Son of God. Our work is not biography but theology; our point of view is not science but faith. The second test of a doctrine of the Atonement is, that it should explain the various forms of language in which New Testament faith celebrates the grace of Christ towards us. The second test is of such a nature that it can only be approximately fulfilled. Scripture is a guide to faith, not a revealed dogmatic. The life of Christ is the first object of our study, because God's historical revelation of Himself culminates and is confirmed in the history of Christ. As M'Leod Campbell has said, we must take the life of Christ as our light. This life, variously looked at, may be described as the revelation of the whole mind of God; or, as the realisation for all mankind (potentially) of God's gracious purpose; or as the conquest of the sin of the whole world by Christ; or as the inoculation of the human race with a principle of sinless righteousness.

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These aspects we sum up in saying that Christ's work was not the legal but the moral antecedent of man's salvation and of all the elements of salvation. And, in explaining how this can have been, we look for guidance to the history of Christ. To use another of Campbell's phrases, we study the Atonement in its own light. On the other hand, we look for light from the instructed moral consciousness of Christian men. We try to reflect into each other what we learn from Christ without, and what we learn from conscience within. The wide *moral* consensus which prevails throughout our Christian civilisation is surely a very noticeable fact. All believers, and most mis-believers or unbelievers, agree in the general outlines of the theory of personal duty. We must do well, it is confessed, if we are to fare well. But evangelical orthodoxy adds on, to the recognised truths of the moral consciousness, the supplementary truths of a doctrinal revelation, which includes a substitutionary atonement. This second truth appears to teach that we are saved without regard to our life or character. It is in such a fashion that evangelical orthodoxy feels constrained to teach man's dependence on Christ. The moral point of view and the religious point of view seem to be flatly opposed to each other; and the spiritual teaching of Evangelicals keeps see-sawing between the two. Again, High Church orthodoxy retains the general moral point of view, retains the supplementary doctrinal point of view of the substitutionary atonement, and adds on yet a third point of view. In the first place, character is salvation; in the second place, creed is salvation; in the third place, baptism is salvation, or conformity to the Church of England is salvation. A sad *mélange*, which makes confusion worse confounded. For our part, we believe that the Atonement is not the destruction, but the fulfilment and completion, of the moral consciousness; that man's need of God is not ultimately due to sin, but ultimately to man's creaturely constitution, though sin aggravates and complicates man's need of God; that virtue is rooted in the grace of God; and that Christ Jesus, by His work of Atonement,

ment, and by His sacraments, and other means of grace, is the particular personal channel, through whom alone, by God's will, grace comes to the fallen race of man. But whatever makes for righteousness is a subsidiary means of grace,—no rival of Christ's, but His forerunner or His servant.

In accordance with these principles, Christ's atonement is to be understood primarily as the gift of holiness, partly in the shape of spiritual knowledge, and partly in the shape of moral strength. We only know God so as to commune with Him by the revelation made to us in Jesus Christ; we can only live the life of God in fellowship with Jesus Christ,—by His example, through His influence, through the society which He has created, through *faith*—believing in His promised gift of a Divine Spirit. The knowledge of God and active righteousness—faith and character—being the primary necessities of men, forgiveness is a second necessity, apart from which we sinful men cannot satisfy the primary needs of our nature, but which reaches us along with those primary gifts through the channels of faith and repentance; since forgiveness is bestowed on us by the agency of Christ the Son of God, the central figure in the world's moral history, the only sinless one, the conqueror of sin. We can demonstrate the absolute necessity of Christ's historical work for the world at large. For any given individual, we cannot prove that Christ's work was psychologically necessary in order that he might be renewed to repentance. God's presence is necessary for salvation—God as light, and as life; God as knowledge, and as power; and, by God's will, He comes to us in Christ—on moral lines, as a historical influence; righteously and holily, because Christ has borne sin and conquered it. Nor is there ultimately salvation for any individual except in the fellowship of his brethren and their Saviour.

II.

4. The gift which God made to the world in the Person of Christ may be understood in the first instance as fundamentally

the gift of a unique character. Germinally, the character of Jesus Christ—the fact of its existence in human nature—contained the whole Gospel. The work of Christ, in its detail, consisted in the realisation in act of the promise contained in the character of Christ. Every human life is similarly a self-realisation. Moral goodness is the realisation of the good self, or the ideal self; a wicked life, or a life of baffled and dwindling aspiration, implies the realisation of a bad self—a bad version of the possible character which we bring with us, undeveloped, into the world. God's providence affords each life a suitable gymnastic for the exercise of its gifts, and for growth in them. But, whereas sinners who are saved have to become that which they are not, the Sinless One has to become that which He essentially is. In a life which, for Him as for us, is temptation no less than opportunity, Christ has to be true to Himself. At all cost, even of the cross and shame, He must be true to His Divine holiness, true to His boundless mercy. Thus He is to 'keep the Father's commandments, and abide in His love.' But, if He do so, Christ will make His own, in a moral and human way, what was from the first His own by natural endowment. He will earn what was the Father's gift. Hence the mere maintenance of such purity as Christ's, in communion with God, passes into something greater than itself. The moral lot and powers of Jesus the boy, of Jesus the prophet, pass on into the moral lot and powers of Jesus the crucified and the glorified, who has 'authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to whatsoever the Father has given him.' Thus He is 'made like unto his brethren, that he may be a merciful and faithful high priest.' Thus, 'though a Son, he *learns* obediently the things which he suffers, and, *being made* perfect, *becomes* to all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation.'¹ To 'keep one's-self pure' is to *grow*. To 'hold fast' is also to attain and to overcome.

The manner of Christ's sinless development and discipline was determined by the nature of His unique mission. What-

¹ Cf. M'Leod Campbell, *Atonement*, ch. xiii. p. 257 (5th ed.).

ever else He was, He must be a revealer (say rather, a revelation); and, in order to be this, He must be a religious teacher. If the gift made to us in Christ is indeed so unparalleled, it is impossible that Christ should live in a corner; when He is sure of Himself—and it is a mature man who stands forth as the world's Saviour—and when, in ways unknown perhaps to us, but well known to Christ, God gives the signal—then Christ must teach openly. And he could do this without immediately telling men the whole secret of the mission. The Jewish prophet, like the Roman tribune,¹ had authority, though informally, from the people. He was recognised as a teacher, immediately directed by God. Christ claimed to be a prophet, and even His enemies, for a time, could not openly reject His claim.

Christ's business or lifework was to be a teacher, directly inspired by God. But His teaching was simply the overflow of His life. Its substance was nothing else than His life made vocal. A dumb Christ could not save men; but, if we are to contrast the different elements in a life where all elements are sacred and all indispensable for its great ends, then it must be maintained that the character and the doings of Christ are even more fundamental than His words. His words are a translation of them; but they are the ultimate fact which makes Christ to be Christ.

The first element to be noted in Christ's teaching is the new spirit of faith which He conveys to men. He invites us to occupy a filial position towards God. Hence the new name of God which He introduces—Jehovah, a name ever sacred, yielding the first place to one deeper and more sacred, the Christian name of God as Father—a name which each individual child of God, however humble, is taught to use. This is indeed, in germ, Christ's gift to men of a holy spirit. But how does Christ make the revelation? Simply by calling God Father; simply by teaching disciples to call God Father; simply by living, in the sight of all the world, the life of a child of God,

¹ *Ecce Homo*, p. 258, ch. xxi.

in filial reverence, in filial devotion, in filial trust. Into this spiritual relation, pregnant with new powers and privileges, Christ called men to enter that they might share it with Him. Yet that does not place Christ and other men on the same level. The fact is eternally significant that Christ, being Himself already within the love of God, invites us to regard ourselves as members of God's family. If we like to do so, we may name the distinctive piety of Jesus Christ 'love to God.' But, if we use that expression, let us always remember that human love to God, even on the part of the Christ, is a clinging dependent love, a secondary love, the echo and reflux of God's love to us, eternal, unbought, uncreated. In the revelation of Fatherhood, Christ may be said to have made disclosures, not only as to the nature of God, but as to the nature of man. For, if the word has brought God near to us, and to each individual soul of us, as never before, it has also given a new elevation and a new tenderness to human fatherhood. For 'we also are God's offspring'; the commonest elements in our life are divine and supernatural: they are full of revelations for us, could they but find an interpreter. The touch of Christ revives and glorifies human love, as well as manifests the love Divine.

The second distinctive feature in Christ's teaching is His new spirit of self-sacrifice. Christian morals are as unique, when Christ introduces them to the world, as Christian faith. The law had undertaken to regulate man's motives; righteousness, as conceived by Christ, itself constitutes the highest and most satisfying of all motives. And it does so just because its claims are now seen to be absolute, and to extend over the whole field of human life. But here also Christ exemplifies what His words teach. With Him duty was not so much an effort as a satisfaction; 'His meat' was 'to do the will of God': 'His yoke' was 'easy, and His burden light.' Thus Christian duty was at one and the same time far easier and far harder than pre-Christian duty. It was harder. The Sermon on the Mount shows us how the law of duty, when

fully unfolded, pierces to the very quick, going deeper than the Old Testament had ever gone, and infinitely deeper than the Scribes' popular version of Old Testament requirements. But at the same time it was easier. Whole-heartedness always is easier than half-heartedness. And, where duty becomes an enthusiasm, its commandments are not grievous. This conception of human duty was expounded by Christ's selfless life—a life in which no personal craving, no personal reserve could be traced—a life aflame with zeal for God and with pitying love for men.

Besides His teaching, however, Jesus Christ had another means at His disposal for impressing men. We who believe in Him think it no wonder that a Being so miraculous, with a mission so unique, should have been able to work miracles. And even scepticism, if it has an historical conscience, must admit that Christ effected cures in a way to which we can adduce no parallel, and of which we cannot give an explanation by any known natural causes. The records make it evident that these 'signs' were what produced the immediate and immense sensation which at first greeted Christ's ministry, at least in Galilee. By themselves, of course, they did not produce permanent effects. Those who believed only under excitement dropped off sooner or later. Christ's unique character—Christ's unique personal influence—was, and is, the centre of true Christianity. But the miraculous signs were of service in many ways. For one thing, they heralded the Gospel. And Christ attached so much importance to them that He allowed His few working months to be largely engrossed with these deeds of mercy. And thus, from the very first, philanthropy was impressed upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ as one of its essential notes. Wherever the spirit of Christ is, there will be found human sympathy as well as Divine mercy.

But there was one other element in Christ's teaching, towards which all the influences of His life converged. He required from men a unique personal recognition. He claimed

that, in His person, the kingdom of God was come near to men. He claimed, in other words, to be the Messiah. This one dogma bound the whole of His teaching together. The historical development of prophecy in Israel had produced this important religious category. First of all, David had left a great name behind him, and later generations tended more and more to idealise his memory. Secondly, the split of the kingdom under Rehoboam was evidently a grave disaster, especially in its religious consequences: and almost all the prophets unite in recommending a return to the Davidic dynasty as the house whom God had chosen. Thirdly, the very fruitfulness of the Davidic stock,¹ and the peaceful succession age after age of father to son, in contrast with the revolutions of the northern kingdom, emphasised and intensified the religious reverence with which the house of David was regarded. Fourthly, the great prophet Isaiah, the creator, according to one of his latest and best interpreters,² of the idea of a personal Messiah, fixed men's hopes, during the very darkest hour, under the very worst of kings, upon that royal Deliverer through whom God was to fulfil all His promises. Thus the special category was prepared under which Jesus offered Himself to mankind as an object of faith. It is true that, for a time, the doctrine had gone very much out of sight. Things came in for which Isaiah's vision had no place—worse sin, followed by national banishment. And when, after the exile, Israel was restored, the heathen overlord was in a comparatively friendly attitude towards the people, which forbade the idea of Messiah, with its political basis, from telling on men. Probably Dr. Robertson Smith is right in referring the revival of the Messianic hope³ to the post-Maccabean age. A

¹ Sir H. S. Maine, I think it is, has pointed to the persistence of the Capet dynasty as an important factor in the making of that most homogeneous of all European countries, France.

² Driver.

³ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article MESSIAH. The curious phrase 'a king from the sun,' in the Jewish sibyl, is isolated. Dr. Smith accounts for it by the writer's position as an Alexandrian, living in a heathen city, as well as under a heathen king.

religious struggle, under non-Davidic leaders, had regained the national independence, when the growing secularity of the reigning house created fierce discontent,¹ and sent men's minds back to God's promises of His chosen Deliverer, the Son of David. Finally, Pompey's violent conquest reunited the spirit of national independence with religious feeling.² But meantime, during the latency of Messianic hope, strictly so called, important contributions had been made to the prophetic doctrine of the future. The doctrine of a resurrection was one such contribution. And still more important was the second Isaiah's doctrine of the 'Servant of the Lord.' If Cheyne and Driver are right in holding that the Great Unknown was depicting an individual servant of God, to be raised up in later times, then what we have in these prophecies is the working out of a second doctrine of a personal Deliverer, on lines parallel to those followed by Isaiah of Jerusalem, but more deeply spiritual. That appears to me a most interesting suggestion, well worthy of being carefully tested.³ On the other hand, to say that the Servant of the Lord *was* the royal Messiah, as some⁴ have done, seems to me a piece of unscholar-like levity. But, after all, the important point in the doctrine of the Servant of the Lord is, not that the prophetic author referred it to an individual, but that subsequent ages, including the Fulfiller Himself, referred it to an individual, viz. to King Messiah. 'The *historical fact* of the influence of the Old Testament in preparing the world for the coming of Christ ought to convince us of its true connection with the Gospel dispensation as part of one grand scheme in the counsels of Divine Providence.'⁵

Such then was the position which Christ was able to claim. He was to be, in a unique sense, God's vicegerent, with unique

¹ Compare the language in Psalter of Solomon, 17.

² *Ib.* 2.

³ But see grave objections stated by Professor A. B. Davidson, *Theological Review*, June 1888.

⁴ Professor Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy*,—but perhaps Dr. Briggs means no more than Cheyne,—and Dr. C. H. H. Wright, *Expositor*, May 1888.

⁵ Stanton, *Jewish and Christian Messiah*, p. 98.

experiences and unique prerogatives. And certainly our Lord Himself put a deeper meaning into Messiahship by the whole course of His life. Not that Christ merely accommodated Himself to the popular belief. We have every reason to suppose that His human consciousness was even helped to the conception of His mission by the Old Testament, used, not critically, but spiritually. 'The King of the Jews' is necessarily the title under which He claims to be head of the human race. Thus when His own convictions (may we say it?) echoed back to Him from the Baptist, He perceived that the promised forerunner had come, and began His own labours. Having to alter men's views of what Messiah should be, He did not openly announce Himself, but found a not less fruitful point of view in expounding to men 'the kingdom of God' which was 'at hand.' Perhaps we shall not greatly err if we say that, while speaking chiefly of *its near approach*, Christ was *actually establishing* the spiritual fellowship which He spoke of under that title. By His very presence in the world, and by the whole of His influence on men, Christ was introducing the final ideal relation between God and His children. Yet this relation had vast possibilities unrealised. The kingdom of God must come in greater 'power.' Whether you say, with the favourite modern view, that the completed Atonement must be the foundation of the Church of Christ—or whether you take the Millenarian view, that Jesus Christ is coming back even yet, in future days, to reign at Jerusalem—or whether you take the view which is implied in the First Gospel, that Jesus, rejected by His own people, was to be rewarded by His heavenly Father with a celestial in place of an earthly crown—at any rate, it is plain that the Spirit of Christ was in the world with Christ, but not in the fulness of His power,—that the work of Christ was truly begun, but not finished. How was it to be finished? How should Christ undertake its completion? By moral means, and by these only. He had found in prophecy, especially in the second Isaiah, this ideal of His ministry. Hence His text in the synagogue sermon at

Nazareth. Hence His message to the doubting Baptist, where we see the new view in sharp contrast with the best form of the popular view. Hence Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem as prince of peace, and no warrior,—an entry followed up by no decisive action,—an appeal to men for faith, and not an instalment of royal state. I do not know that we need object to the view taken in some modern lives of Christ, that at first the destined issue of His life was unknown, or only most dimly known, to the Master, and that, while He would grasp nothing for Himself, He would have joyfully accepted a kingship in brighter and cheerfuller forms had His Father led Him to such a kingship. Only we must not admit that our Lord counted on such a kingship, or that its coming was to Him a mere question of time. When He waited for His Father's hand, He was waiting till the moral fruits of His ministry should appear. He performed the mighty works given Him to do, only as 'signs.' This was the mysterious thing about Christ,—the offence and the glory of His cross,—that a life overflowing with supernatural, making the most startling claims on men's faith, was yet lived, and was ended in violent death, as any other human life might be. It was a life of faith, depending on God's providence, accepting God's will.

But it will be manifest that the dogmatic assertion of His Messiahship was vital to Christ. He died for it. When no evidence could incriminate Him, He incriminated Himself. This is Christian dogma, that Jesus is Christ. Of course that confession is naught apart from Christ's new spirit of faith and from His new spirit of self-sacrifice. Apart from these, professed faith in Jesus as the Messiah is a barren opinion, if not a falsehood. But these things are not promised to us except through faith in Christ. God's Fatherhood is a Christian truth; 'the way of the holy cross' is a Christian law of life. Not that we would imply that Christ turns God into our Father from being something else, or that self-sacrifice would not be a duty if Christianity were untrue. The New Testament does not reflect on such questions. We must frame our own natural

theology, our own speculative ethics, or else go without them. But whatever we do, we must not regard Christ as a teacher of moral or religious generalities. He is founder of a fellowship within which the truths which He lived out in His own life may become realities, forces, powers, in other lives also. Hence He asserts Himself, along with the Father and with the law of Sacrifice, because He is the only way to the Father and the only sure source of moral strength. At least, so Christ Himself believed; and for believing that He died. The Christianity which He lived in His own life, and which He died to put in circulation, is simply the Christianity of the Lord's prayer, *plus*, faith in Himself as Christ. The claim to be future judge of quick and dead seems an original trait¹ in the conception of Messiah,—a trait which startlingly reveals the dignity of Christ's self-consciousness, and the universality of the 'glad tidings' which were to be testified of Him.

Let us sum up our study of Christ's life so far as it has now carried us. We find Christ to be a religious teacher, revealing God as a Father and self-sacrifice as the law and spring of daily life. We find Christ to be a worker of miracles—chiefly miracles of healing,—using them as signs of His mission, but never using them for personal ends. And, finally, Christ claims to be the expected Messiah, a conception which He broadens and deepens till it has world-wide and age-long significance. Such is Christ's life. He is a teacher-king,—not otherwise a king at all, in visible seeming; a king of truth, as He said to Pilate. How His life is further to take shape, and how it is to issue, He commits to His Father's providence.

But we, looking back upon Christ's finished history, with something of His holy Spirit in our hearts, can see that, even in the light of those elements of His lifework which we have already enumerated, it is morally fitting and seemly that His life should be crowned by death. He has come to reveal the Father and to reveal righteousness before the whole world. He

¹ Stanton, p. 153; Drummond, *Jewish Messiah*, p. 390. Baldensperger denies this (*Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*). See Essay II. *infra*.

has come to be perfected in faith and in self-sacrifice, that all men may believe with His faith, and deny themselves with His self-denial. How can the Father's love be revealed so well as in the extremest gift? How can righteousness be fully known unless it is tested with the sorest tests? If it is a struggle in us, must we not see it costing our Deliverer a struggle?¹ How can the perfecting of the world's redemption exempt the Redeemer from the last agony of death?

But death, violent death, is only possible for the Christ through the sin of man. Let us turn therefore to study the life of Christ as it is determined in relation to sin.

B. Hitherto sin has been in some sort the negative presupposition of our study of Christ's life. We have seen Christ making good man's deficiencies of ignorance and weakness. These we cannot doubt are in large measure the effect of sin; though it may be impossible to say how a sinless humanity would have been led into that living knowledge of God which alone constitutes salvation. But now we have to remind ourselves that sin is no mere defect. It is a virulent cancer. It brings with it guilt, which destroys the soul's inner peace, and frightens it away from God. It mars and distorts that growth of character which is the chief end of human life and of the history of the race. Christ, in the strength of His moral purity, evoked the enmity of sin, met in conflict the sin of the world, and conquered it.

The first feature we note in Christ's relation to sin is His personal sinlessness. At the very core of His humble, gracious heart, when we look to find the customary confession of unworthiness and moral defeat, we look, and we seem to be looking into a blank space; but it is really full of the soft radiance of heaven's pure light and of heaven's holy peace. No doubt sinlessness is an inadequate term² by which to describe the

¹ This point is well put in *St. Paul and Protestantism*,—the most Christian of Arnold's writings.

² Stalker, *Life of Jesus Christ*, § 114.

character of Jesus Christ. But for all that it is a very significant term. It is the term by which the sinful man naturally expresses his sense of the Master's peculiar glory. Others there were, before Christ, who were in great measure heroes—men of faith, patience, virtue; others there have been, since Christ, with much of Christ's own spirit of trust in the Father, and of self-spending for the Father's sake and for the brethren's: but of sinless natures there has not been one, and the best of Christ's followers have been the most keenly aware of sin. Doubtless the sinlessness was only possible because goodness in Christ was no pale, negative quality, but an aggressive energy of love and holiness. But Christ communicates this aggressive energy before He communicates sinlessness. Men are to recognise Christians by the spirit of love that is in them; but only God's eye can see in His struggling children in this world the promise of sinlessness.

Nor can the significance of Christ's 'knowing no sin' be evaded or attenuated by any fair arguments. There are sometimes good men—*e.g.* pious Unitarians—who are little aware of sin and do not attend to it,—men of a sweet and enthusiastic but rather shrill and thin moral nature. Christ was no such maimed character. He came in a race which had been studying sin for centuries. No shortsighted idealist could have given Christ's terrible description of the things which come 'from within, out of the heart.' Yet the author of that description was the Man who never once joined in confessing personal sin. And the author of that list, 'knowing what was in man,' *loved* men!

The second point which we note in Christ's relation to sin is, that He appeared upon the earth forgiving sin. Hebrew prophecy, in a distinct branch from either of the Messianic doctrines which we noted above, had spoken of forgiveness in an emphatic sense, as being one of the blessings of the coming golden age (Jer. xxxi. 34). And Jesus acted the Messiah by once and again (Matt. ix. 2; Luke vii. 48) intimating to a penitent soul the forgiveness of sin. Can we grasp the significance of

this? If we are staggered—as we well may be—by the doctrine of Christ's sinless humanity, let us ask ourselves whether it is conceivable that a sinful man should presume to say to a fellow-sinner, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' This, if nothing else, would prove Christ's sinless holiness. And, although Christ only spoke words of forgiveness upon suitable occasion, and therefore not frequently, yet, if He is able to speak such words at all, it can only be because His very presence in the earth denotes that God is forgiving the penitent. Everything in Christ's life has that meaning; and, if He die, His death will reiterate, with the strongest of all pledges, this solemn and blessed assurance.

Here I ask the reader to pause, in order to notice with special care that Christ's religious position is central in the history of our race. On historical grounds, even apart from grounds of faith, this is evidently true. I claim that it is true even on the ground of Christ's teaching, and apart from the deeper aspects of His work. He stands between two worlds, the old and the new. Wherever His influence penetrates, He abrogates the effete religions of paganism; and, in his ideas about God and about duty, the whole of the modern world, on its spiritual side, is wrapped up. Still further, Christ Himself claimed the central place. That was the meaning of the Messiahship which He confessed at the sacrifice of His life. God had sent other good and true messengers before Him, said Christ on one occasion; now God had sent his Son. And the originality, the triumphant creative beauty of Christ's thought,—with the unparalleled character of the stainless life in which His thoughts were embodied and exhibited—these well support His claim to be the world's central light and its final Judge.

Christ is thus God's utmost gift. And hence we notice, thirdly, that the reaction against Christ is an embodiment of the sin of the whole world. Christ thus appears as bearing and as combating the sin of the world. For, if Christ has to meet with shameful rejection, He is bearing it in inward shame

and grief, as truly as He is destroying it by visible holiness and godliness. We cannot say that this reaction of sin against Christ was necessary. In the region of character there is no such thing as mechanical necessity. Sin has its characteristic tendency, and righteousness has its characteristic tendency; but neither of them works inevitably. The Jews were not necessitated to kill Christ. Only, when they did so, they betrayed in themselves the characteristic sin of their nation and of the whole human race. Christ was rejected, because the Messiahship which He offered men was too lofty and spiritual to be of any value in the eyes of His enemies. Hence the death of Christ was the typical and characteristic—though not the necessary—manifestation of the world's sin. The contemptuous rejection of God's utmost gift is the world's way. In other words, every sin—all unfair judgment, all wilful impatience, all cherishing of hatred and grudges, all unscrupulous policy—is shown by God to be, at the heart of it, Christ-murder. Other instances of sin may not be so great as the sin of the Jewish priests; although it is not our part to say whether or not the sin of these men was individually greater than other sins of other men. Even the murder of Christ was pardonable; all sin against the Son of Man is pardonable; and the Gospel of the risen Saviour began its career at Jerusalem. But, though sins differ in degree and in species, sin is as truly congruous to sin as righteous deed is to righteous deed; and one offending tends to breed many offences. And this revelation of the world's sin was the revelation and condemnation of the true nature of every sin. For Christ is not merely an individual righteous human being. He is one charged with a gift for mankind. 'The life' in Him 'is the light of men'; and, by enlightening men, it is calculated to assimilate them, however slowly, to Christ's image. For this reason it is seemly that God should offer us forgiveness in connection with Christ's victory over sin. It is seemly that Christ's death and resurrection should form a turning-point in mankind's relations to God. 'He is our peace.' Sin had infected the very quality of human

society. 'Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the peoples of Israel,' represented the self-assertion of a sinful humanity, pushing aside God's 'holy servant' as a mere offence to it. But it became God to suffer this, and to overrule even this for His glory and for salvation to all who repent. 'His counsel foreordained' the worst deeds of Christ's enemies.—Nor again may we be able to say that it was necessary for Christ to bear our sins in suffering before forgiveness could reach any one of us. But, before a whole world's salvation could reach the world, in the way chosen by God, Christ's suffering was deeply necessary.

Here then was the moral crisis of Christ's history. On one side He stood—with the highest possible thoughts of God and of duty, with the most gracious of possible miracles, claiming recognition as God's Son, yet doing nothing to force this recognition upon reluctant minds. On the other side His enemies stood, resolved that He could not be, should not be, the Messiah—resolved, as He insisted on His claim, to have Him put out of the way. Do not let us imagine that these men were monsters of sin above all others! Do not let us shrink from giving their motive a name, lest we come to palliate their crime! Every human deed, sinful or otherwise, looks inevitable once it is fairly understood; yet every deed, sinful or otherwise, is man's free choice; and every deed has its motive. The misfortune of Christ's murderers was to encounter Him under circumstances which made neutrality almost impossible. The hierarchy had a professional duty to judge of His claims. Either they ought to join Jesus' disciples, or Jesus must be pronounced a blasphemer. It was hard to face so cruel an alternative! A peasant prophet, an unlearned man without the literary *cachet*, an idealist, who stuck at no personal sacrifice, and who expected all His followers to be as madly devoted as He Himself,—such Jesus must have seemed to them. But let there be no mistake on the other side! Do not let us insinuate that they were 'deduced into expectations of a temporal deliverer, and then

punished because they could not understand that it was a spiritual deliverer that was intended.¹ They had Christ's claims before them, in plain enough words. They had His matchless teaching before them, and His matchless character—words such as never man spake—goodness not walking, as it too often must, with the prim carefulness of a straitened nature, but glowing with genius, with originality, with creative freshness, with spiritual triumph. They were asked to exchange their hereditary hopes only for others far higher and better. This was their probation, and their opportunity. Even the Old Testament, from which they drew their own doctrines, was full of Christ's higher thoughts. His disciples tell us how it was revealed to them in an entirely new light after His sufferings—how it flashed all over with lessons which they had formerly missed, but which were focussed in Christ and in His cross. That came later ; but, even during Christ's life, true-hearted disciples found enough in Him to cling to. He alone had 'the words of eternal life.' Amid all their faults, they 'believed that God had sent Him.' But the hierarchy, refusing to believe, was driven on to oppose and to reject Him—driven on largely (let it be confessed) by Christ's denunciation of their conduct. Thus the death of Christ was the natural outcome of the moral situation. But sin led to sin. Uncandour, wilfully rejecting Christ, had to fabricate a charge of treason in order to get Him legally murdered, though the sting of His whole life was, that, while He claimed to be their king, it was impossible to get any treason out of Him. They were ready enough to befriend the insurgent brigand Barabbas, in order to secure the condemnation of the so-called traitor Jesus. Had human sin been less virulent, why should the loving sinless Christ have been put to death? Sin being what it is, how else were sinners likely to handle Him? The character of Christ, if Christ were placed in a world of sinners, was only too sure a prophecy of His cross. And, once they saw Him placed on the cross, His enemies too faithfully mani-

¹ George Eliot's *Life*, ch. ii. p. 49.

fested their predicted character. King Messiah—submitted. The wonder-worker did nothing for Himself in His own sore straits; and the silent heaven sent no aid. They drew a long, choking breath of relief, and burst into hideous cries of mutual congratulation. The masquerade was over! The mischievous fanatic was safely disposed of! 'He saved others! Himself He cannot save! Let Him come down from the cross, that we may believe!' *He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now, if He desireth Him*,—it is not likely they used the very words of the Psalm, although the First Gospel represents them as doing so; even their passion could hardly have carried them, unchecked, through such a self-betrayal and self-condemnation; but how completely they acted in the spirit of the mockers described in the Psalm!

All this was nothing strange to Christ. Long ago He had forecast it—first, it may be, from Old Testament prophecy, then, no doubt, from the evident signs of the times: again and again He had spoken of it to the deaf ears of his reluctant pre-occupied disciples; and, from the first, it had appeared to Him encircled with the halo of the Father's gracious purpose—a death which should prove 'a ransom for many'—a 'lifting up from the earth' which should have all the glory of a coronation—a blood-shedding 'for the remission of sins.' Towards this He had 'steadfastly set His face,' willingly offering the last sacrifice. But who can forecast what it is to die? Nay, might not the prevision, often repeated, unnerve the bravest man?—as our Lord was unnerved in Gethsemane for the moment, though He found His strength again at the Father's footstool. Add to this all the elements of terror and of shame in that death—love rejected, insulted, mocked; holiness tortured by the sight and hearing of coarse, callous wickedness; above all, a heart that sympathised with God's righteousness, and yearned over all men, seeing the rejection of God's gift of love—seeing this sin as God sees it. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Foul clouds of sin steaming up upon His soul—the sin of the whole world acting out its meaning—no wonder He so cried.

Yet Christ died as a conqueror, when sin had wreaked its worst upon Him. For this very end He had encountered death, to brave the worst of sin and to overcome it. For Him, as for His followers, the commandment ran, 'Be thou faithful *unto death.*' To Himself He may have said, as well as to the disciples, 'Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have *no more that they can do.*'—To ordinary human feeling, death is the end of all hope; to Christ it was only the end of suffering, the beginning of a truer life.—Christ had been faithful; He had confessed His Messiahship; He had borne witness to the truth; in suffering—all that was left Him—He accepted the Father's will. Hence the apostle leads us to say that He 'died to sin,' a phrase which we may perhaps break up into these two—He *died rather than sin,* and *by death He escaped out of the power of sin.* But Christ, in His escape, made a way by which others may escape. Through faith in Him we likewise are dead to sin; we likewise are set free from its power.

For Christ's work was followed by resurrection; and the Bible does not encourage us to separate any part of the meaning of Christ's work from this fact. The resurrection is the only fitting end for the history of the Saviour. But it has other reasons which commend it to us. We cannot value it rightly apart from the Old Testament record of the Hebrew yearning after immortality—its toilsome search, its fluttering hopes, its frequent deep dejection. The resurrection had indeed become a dogmatic trait in the picture of the Messianic age; but such a resurrection, so conceived, was very far from being a real spiritual power, satisfying and saving the hearts of men. 'I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day'; how dull a dogma! Now Christ, who had transformed and glorified the idea of His own work as Messiah, was in God's providence to transform the hopes which devout people had formed of the Messianic salvation. Resurrection was to come—although, as yet, only in 'Christ the first-fruits.' But He must rise; or else hope must die.

This we may allow to sceptical criticism, that, if an illusory belief in the return of a dead man to life was to spring up in Judæa at the time of Christ, it would take the form of belief in his resurrection. 'This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead.' Even a life translated to heavenly glory would be spoken of as a risen life. Such was the dialect of the current theology. The Alexandrians who spoke of the naked immortality of the soul were a sect, and a heterodox sect. There was a general expectation of resurrection at the miraculous era of the Messiah. But not of the Messiah's own resurrection! any more than of the Messiah's atoning death. Thus, when Christ died, no one of His disciples—in spite of all He had said—dreamed of His really rising again. Grief and love led certain women to the sepulchre—but not hope. Yet He rose again. If we accept John's Gospel, John himself saw the empty grave. If we accept even the earlier tradition of Mark, the women saw the empty grave. If we accept the tradition of the whole Church, 'He showed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs.' And, if we accept the judgment of Paul, the risen Jesus appeared to him also on the Damascus road once, and once only, in a way totally different from those 'visions and revelations' which ran through the whole of his Christian life. At any rate, all admit that the belief in Christ's resurrection saved the Church alive. Was a false belief at the heart of the world's moral progress? Sceptics may think so; I do not understand their ways of thinking. They must claim, I presume, to have reached a superior moral elevation to that of Jesus, who achieved all that He did achieve in the strength of an intense religious faith. But how sceptics construe the history of moral growth I do not pretend to understand. Nor can I enter into the motives of Keim's view (shared by so distinguished a thinker as Hermann Lotze¹) that the resurrection was a real event in so far as the celestial Christ supernaturally produced a series of visions in men's minds—but that, meanwhile, Christ's body rotted in the

¹ *Microcosmus*, tr. ii. p. 480.

grave, and 'saw corruption.' This is contrary to history.¹ And what can it be but a step towards believing the visions illusory? If one critic makes every miracle a vision, the next critic makes every vision a hallucination. The anti-miraculous bias explains the visions by morbid conditions: it explains them as illusions. How will Keim's followers keep some brilliant critic from disposing of all the visions of the risen Christ as Holsten has endeavoured to do? They will fight at a terrible disadvantage. No: if we believe in Christ, it is not for us to say, 'It is impossible that His body should have risen.' We cannot roll back the stone, and seal up the hopes of mankind in sad uncertainty. He is not dead; He is risen; He has appeared to chosen witnesses; death as much as life is subject to His rule; 'whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's.'

When Christ left the world, only a few hundred disciples remained as the fruit of the Divine life and passion. They seemed a dwindling remnant. Had Jesus failed? Nay: the root of the new humanity is in that little company; pardon, joy, faith, love will spread from them till the whole world shares the blessing. They thought of Christ's speedy return in visible glory to end the world; God meant that they should be the beginning of a new epoch.

But in order to study this, we must pass on to the second part of our subject.

III.

The subject of Christ's religious value might also be described under the old heading of the offices which Christ executes. If so, Christ's revelations might be referred to His prophetic office; though part of what is generally called prophetic will be with us kingly. Reconciliation might be referred to His priestly office, though it is our study of Christ's life which

¹ Matthew's guard of soldiers must however be given up as a traditional embellishment. Compare Weiss's *Life of Christ*.

brings out the value of His work for God ; and redemption in the narrower sense might be attributed to His kingly office. But Eusebius of Cæsarea has no binding authority on our consciences ; and his vague metaphorical categories offer no advantages over a fresh and literal terminology. Perhaps it is more important to notice that the first three heads—that of Christ as revealer, and the two which are embraced under Christ as reconciler—describe Christian faith, while the last head, on redemption, describes Christian virtue. It may also be observed that the whole remainder of our subject might be treated as an account of the work of the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and works within the sphere of Christ's influence. In fact, Christ's influence is spiritual. And nothing will redeem the doctrine of the Holy Spirit from barrenness so well as to show that He 'takes of the things of Christ' and thus 'glorifies Him.' Finally, we may observe that the separate topics are not distinct compartments in one physical whole, but different aspects of a moral whole, each aspect involving more or less reference to all the others. The first head, for instance, in a manner includes the other three. God is revealed in Christ as forgiving sin, comforting us in sorrow, and redeeming the world. And again, the last head recapitulates the three which precede it. Christ's redemptive work not only makes God's will the law of man's will, but denotes the actual operation of all those saving influences which are brought to bear upon us in the Gospel. But these relations will explain themselves as we go on.

We begin with considering Christ's revelations. Man as a spiritual being, rational and moral, if approached by God in grace, must be approached with revelations. Reason in man is responsible for what influences it will permit to play upon the character and affections. A true friend will 'commend himself to our consciences in the sight of God.' It is a false friend and false man who uses the tricks of a mesmerist, 'creeping into houses, and leading captive silly women.' If

goodness takes to fighting badness with such sly strategy, it deserves to fail. And it will fail. There is no element of permanence in the irrational influence which a strong will—religious or irreligious—may easily establish over weak wills. Those who build for eternity must build on the rock of truth. Therefore God Himself does so. He approaches us in the first instance with revelations, appealing to our reason, asking for our scrutiny, submitting to our judgment. No doubt the response comes from our whole nature. ‘With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.’ Nevertheless reason is God’s trustee in charge of our hearts; and, though the heart may give the inclination, the head must give authorisation.

But, in a spiritual religion, revelation is not a preliminary *part* of the whole, but a primary *aspect* of the whole. What we deal with under our first head, as God’s revelation in Christ, will come up again and again in a different shape under subsequent heads. Man is rational in his affections, in his conscience, in his will; although in these God—having paved the way by revelation—approaches man differently, and invites man to a different sort of co-operation with the Father through His Spirit.

In revealing God to the world, Christ did not find Himself confronted by an entirely irreligious, or by an entirely sceptical world. Neither of individual men, nor of human society as a whole, could such assertions be truly made. Early human societies are very devout in their purblind way. And for a time, as civilisation advances, there seems to be a distinct movement towards monotheism. But natural religions have no moral stamina, and cannot keep in this groove. We need not brand them as out-and-out *false* religions. In so far as they ever tended to make their votaries better men, they were not false but true, containing stray gleams from the Father of lights—scattered rays from Him who lighteth every man. But, on the whole, and in the immense majority of cases, they were *unsuccessful* religions. And when Christ came the disease of scepticism was sweeping through the Greek and Roman

world, working havoc. The old sanctions were disbelieved, and nothing had taken their place.

The Old Testament religion was of course on a different footing. It had a history of steady moral and spiritual growth through centuries. God had spoken to men here, reaching the masses through the elect souls of His prophets. Men had spoken back to God in not less truly inspired utterances. We need not deny that the prophets sometimes erred,—that their revelations were conditioned, were partial: it is enough for us to assert that God carried on a sufficient preparation for Christ through their ministry. If modern criticism does nothing else for us, I think we may thank it for peopling the post-prophetic centuries, which were supposed to be barren, with the singing voices of many psalmists, as well as with other less tuneful witnesses for God and for righteousness. Nay, more; prophetic inspiration had revisited the Old Covenant, even before Christ's ministry began. The Baptist finished its work when he 'made ready a people prepared for the Lord.'

Why then must the Old Testament religion pass through a complete transformation in the person and work of Christ? The answer is, that, though not equally unsuccessful with the heathen religions, it was temporary no less than they, and was even more rigidly limited. The Old Testament religion was the religion of a tribal stock. It was made possible by the national life and national self-consciousness. Within this given 'covenant' framework, by dint of moral truths—not revealed in dry abstraction, but in the living context of history—God's prophets taught their people deeper views of God and duty—wider views of the coming glory. But even the widest views could not break through the old barriers. The second Isaiah states all his glorious prophecies in terms of the hegemony of Israel. But the progress of civilisation necessarily brought with it the rise of rationalism; and the questioning mood, along with such a doctrine as that of personal immortality, must soon make an end of any religion which rested on the old naïve, living sympathy which had connected the

tribes of Israel with their Jehovah. Old Testament faith was 'decaying, and waxing old, and ready to vanish away.' If it were to last, it must be somehow transformed. In two ways this was done. Jesus Christ kept its spirit, and transformed the letter, universalising religion at His cross. The Pharisees kept the letter, and destroyed the spirit, of the Old Covenant. Out of the gracious faith of patriarchs and psalmists, they developed an immense casuistical machinery of self-salvation. And with this they galvanised their dead religion into an appearance of life for centuries.

The case of the individual as regards the knowledge of God was even more serious. A nation may make a fair show, ecclesiastically, if it possesses good dogmas. Personal religious life, on the other hand, involves faith. But sin had brought shame with it, and shame forbade faith in God. And the impurity of sin rendered the vision of God impossible. If then the knowledge of God is to be restored to the race, it must be through God's gracious gift. And His gift cannot reach its end unless, while revealing Himself, He is forgiving men and cleansing them. Even in Israel itself, the old worship was ceasing to satisfy. For it 'could not make the worshipper perfect, as touching the conscience.'

(I.) Thus Christ came into the world as the restorer and rescuer of faith,—a part which He was able to fill because He was at the same time the perfecter of faith, and because He was, further, the quickener of conscience. It was His part to reconstruct, spiritually, that intuitive consciousness of God which reason had threatened, and which sin had broken. He does not create the idea of God; He presupposes it, as latent in all minds; but He so interprets it—commending Himself to men's consciences—that God ceases to be a name and becomes a living fact in human history. Evidences of Christianity spring up in an age when old dogmas are losing their authority; and the formal proofs of Christ's Divine mission may possibly be regarded as so far similar—as proving that mankind's early religious instincts had failed it. But Christ does not rebuild

the religious consciousness by miracles alone. On the contrary, we may affirm that miracles hold a subordinate, though yet an indispensable place, the first place belonging to Christ's personal influence. We need not affirm that every miracle recorded in the Bible, or even in the New Testament, is a historical fact. Nay, had God withheld miracles from us entirely, it may be—it may be—that Christian faith would still have been possible. But I think we should have felt a strange defect if so great and supernatural an event as the world's redemption had taken place without any unusual physical 'signs.' Our spiritual impressions are reinforced by our senses. As Christ Himself taught, it was comparatively easy 'to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee;' but to say to a paralysed man, 'Rise up and walk,' required some power behind the speaker. And the denial of the very possibility of miracle is a choking, strangling lie, against which we must fight for dear life. The Gospel revelation of immortality tells us that there are other regions where God's moral purposes are realised, besides this earthly scene. And more than that: whereas the Agnostic affirms that there is an inscrutable force at the back of the universe,—whereas the Calvinist affirms the same thing in his own way—we have to bear witness, against both, that the universe proceeds from a luminous character, from a living God. To say that miracle is impossible is to deny the living God,—to replace Him either by a physical force or by a logical formula. But God lives; He has freely created all things in His wisdom; He has, in part, revealed Himself in His works; He has expressed Himself in His works; but He has not exhausted Himself in them.

Perhaps it may be well to refer here to Hume's celebrated argument against miracles, especially as the high authority of Mr. T. H. Green—whose name has been so curiously introduced to the novel-reading public—can be quoted in support of Hume's conclusions. Mr. Green speaks of Hume's argument, 'irrefragable in itself,' as 'turning wholly upon that conception of nature, as other than our instinctive expectations and imagi-

nations, which has no proper place in his system.'¹ The last remark is certainly true. Of all thinkers that ever lived, Hume had the least right to vindicate the uniformity of nature. But it does not follow that those who believe in uniformity are forbidden by that belief to accept miracle. All our rational life, all our moral life, presupposes the orderliness of nature. But, very plainly, miracle itself presupposes the orderliness of nature as God's general rule of dealing with us. If there be no order of nature, there can be no miraculous breach of order;—so that Canon Mozley's Bampton Lecture proves a great deal too much for his own case. Miracle then presupposes order. Whether or not we admit that miracle ever has chequered the course of nature, will depend very much on the fact whether we regard nature as the evolution of a blind force or logical formula, or as the carrying out of a spiritual purpose.

In Hume's statement, the argument against miracles is complicated with considerations as to the nature of human testimony. And the brilliant writer, who has recently set the fashionable world talking earnest scepticism, represents the history of testimony as sufficiently disproving all alleged miracles. These are two different arguments. Hume represents all experiences of uniformity as constituting a great heap of probability on one side, and the illusion of miracle as forming a tiny heap on the opposite side. If this representation proved anything, it would prove that it was psychologically impossible for men to believe that a miracle had happened, which is absurd. Mrs. Humphry Ward's assertion is that, in unscientific ages, groundless belief in miracle is extremely common and altogether natural. But the Palestine of our Lord's lifetime was not so utterly barbarous; nor was Jesus Christ Himself an enthusiast who could be duped. If an epoch of superstition set in after the corruption of Christianity, the case was different when Christ lived. Prodiges were not yet in the air. 'John did no miracles.' Christ's own miracles

¹ Introduction to Hume, p. 276.

deserve the more credit. They are unique, as Christ was. The technical methods of science have been infinitely improved; but, in ordinary human relationships, we stand much in the same position with Peter or Paul, or any other shrewd and candid man. The impression of personality is the last thing we have to trust to, either in heaven or earth; it is our discipline, it is our salvation, that we should trust wisely but loyally. And when it comes to taking faith at second-hand, why should our belief dwindle to such a truncated faith as 'Mr. Grey's,' or Robert Elsmere's? Would it not be wiser to say, 'Let Christ's faith answer for me'? On the whole, Jesus Christ is a higher authority on religious points than even honoured and honourable philosophers of the present day.

Christ's works come to us then along with Christ's character, and along with Christ's claim to know God, to be sent from God, to reveal God. And this claim comes to us associated, not merely with the miracles, but with the whole previous course of Israel's religious history, really summed up in Christ—associated with prophetic expectations, fulfilled, in the deepest sense, by Christ—along with the whole course of Christian history, which teems with proof of the spiritual forces that were latent in the humble Galilean prophet. The spiritual has outlived the supernatural for the time. Christianity stands chiefly on its moral wonders, though it has the memory of its miracles, and the expectation of greater miracles yet to come. There was no abrupt cessation of wonder. All the baptized received 'the Holy Spirit'—had, in the early time of ecstasy, a quickening of the whole religious nature which rose into miracle. Thus Christianity at first appeared to the world as a standing miracle—a continuous display of the physical supernatural. But when, by a most brilliant generalisation, St. Paul had co-ordinated these gifts with the directly moral 'fruits of the Spirit,' it became possible for the Church, escaping the Montanistic reaction, to pass into a period of quiet historical growth, which need not be less

Divine or less Christian because its marvellous works were exclusively spiritual. Possibly, if the modern Christian world were more united, or more spiritual, God might renew similar attestations to His truth. Possibly not: the season of these particular wonders may be over, never more to return. We at any rate must persevere in the plain path of duty, and must take warning, from the sad history of many pious enthusiasts, lest we likewise should lose our balance by a morbid craving for the preternatural.

(II.) We pass on now to speak of the positive contents of Christ's revelation of God. He comes to us as a human personality in human history, winning His way to men's regard by patient self-commending—winning His place by moral human means. Yet He is a unique personality, and claims, with growing distinctness, a unique place. He, the Messiah, is to be the absolute organ of God's will. That He may be this, God's spirit rests upon Him. Thus the mind of God is manifested to us in the whole life of Christ. Every deed He does is the Father's doing. His revelation is not intellectual, but spiritual. He does not tell us about God, but shows us God. He restores the intuition of God, the beatific vision, in human souls. Whatever mysteries may hang over Christ's person, we have the personal presence of God with us in Him; He is a Divine gift, coming with Divine self-sacrifice, out of His native glory, in order to save us. Every good and heroic deed has come out of God's heart; but the mercy and love of Christ are very God Himself. For all these ages the character of Christ has been our doctrine of God.

At this point we meet with an objection which is not less formidable from being purely imaginative or rhetorical—not logical. It is frequently announced as decisive against the Bible religion. We find it in that disagreeable book, Miss Martineau's *Autobiography*. We find it more reverently and gently worded in Mr. Beard's *Hibbert Lectures*. 'Did then God die for us? . . . The whole system of Atonement of

which Anselm is the author shrivels into inanity amid the light, the space, the silence of the stellar world.'¹

Of course no conclusive or demonstrative answer can be made to such a state of feeling. All we can do is to recall men from imaginary circumstances to known moral realities. We know nothing of the existence of other human races (angels, let us call them) in other planets; if such races do exist, we know nothing of their moral condition or of their special necessities. On the other hand, we do know something of man's need and of God's grace. Moral magnitudes are infinitely great; no physical immensities can in the least dwarf them or make them dwindle down. On the other hand, if *one soul's* guilt, *one soul's* salvation, is infinitely solemn, we cannot deny that the guilt or the gaining again of a myriad human souls from this earth is a myriadfold more solemn. This fact confronts us every day and every hour; it is pre-eminently the fact with which we have to deal: nothing can ever supersede it or spoil it of its intrinsic greatness. And then comes to us so placed—knowing what we do, ignorant of what may lie beyond, as we are—then comes to us the assurance that God feels the greatness of human misery and need, and that God, being so perfect as He is, has stepped into our need in order to save us. And this assurance comes to us not as a fancy or as a postulate, but as a fact. It is the fact of Christ, interpreted by Christian faith,—a fact which no other interpretation has ever succeeded in dealing with. Do not let our incredulity lead us to give the lie to this Divine fact, 'believing not the record which God gave of His Son.' It is significant, surely, that the Unitarianism which makes such use of the Fatherhood of God does not dare to affirm that 'the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.' Let Unitarians exaggerate human excellence as they may, God remains too far off, on such a scheme, to be conceived as entering the fellowship of our misery. In such a God there would be little help or none. We should continually be in danger of losing Him in the

¹ P. 389.

intricacies of life or in the immensities of creation. For my part I miss God, the remote, the unsearchable, in all those 'stellar silences.' And I give thanks for His grace when I find Him again, new revealed, and eternally assured to us, in the cradle and on the cross of Jesus Christ.

How then does Christ's revelation speak?

(1) Christ reveals God because He is Himself dependent upon God. The filial life thus shows us the nature and workings of God's Fatherhood. He is the first to know God; others come to know God later, because Christ gives them a share in the fellowship of His knowledge. Considered in this light, as leading the typical human life, or life of sonship, Christ becomes the fulfilment of those Old Testament passages which describe the 'saint' (*e.g.* Ps. xvi.), and which, often running beyond their immediate subject in pursuit of the ideal, may be called in a sense Messianic passages. And accordingly the Book of Acts, and some other New Testament passages, speak of Christ Jesus as 'the Holy One,' or as 'the Righteous One.' Christ's consecration reveals the Father, who is able and willing thus to sanctify His children.

(2) Secondly, Christ reveals God because He is the perfect instrument of God's will. It is not so much the first creation as the new creation that really reveals God; and the new creation is the work of Christ incarnate. All Christ's teaching, all His deeds of mercy, all obedience and suffering that He passed through, show us the will of God done with delight. For this as foreshadowed in the Old Testament, we might quote again its description of the typical saint. But there is another Old Testament picture which is more peculiarly appropriate to this aspect of Christ's work—the second Isaiah's portrait of the *servant* of the Lord. This name likewise occurs in the early chapters of Acts, transferred from the pages of the Bible—all the Bible these first Christians had—to that 'life' which had been 'manifested' before them, and to which it evidently by right belonged. They prayed for blessings 'in the name of God's holy servant Jesus.'

(3) Thirdly, Christ reveals God because He is an absolute image of the Divine character, 'the effulgence of His glory, and the express image of His substance.' Expressed in terms of a human life—so shaped and so modulated that we can take it in—we have Godhead itself in Christ; and whoever has seen Him has seen the Father. To this there is, I think, no Old Testament counterpart. The Old Testament had forbidden any image or resemblance of God; and it is remarkable enough that the New Testament, in describing the glory and excellence of Christ, should reclaim the forbidden word, telling us that Christ is 'the image of God,' 'the image of the invisible God.' To the same purpose is St. John's phraseology, when Christ is termed 'the Word' or complete utterance of God. In consequence of this revelation, all Christian centuries take their idea of God from the character of Christ, and find that source unailing in its richness.

(4) These three aspects under which Christ reveals the Father, may be regarded as summed up in His name, *the Son*. For the Son is, by His constitution, dependent on the Father; it is His place to serve the Father, though in filial freedom, not in bondage; and He is, because a son, like the Father. This word again is an Old Testament word, used typically (possibly in some Psalms directly) of the Messiah. But we are well assured that no Old Testament use of the word was any forecast of its New Testament elevation. The latter is peculiar to the New Testament, and characteristic of its revelations. In the Old Testament the word stands as a memory that man was made in the image of God, and as a foreshadowing of the truth (to be unveiled in Christ) of God's universal Fatherhood. In the New Testament it is much more. It tells us that, however mystery may encompass the Divine nature, yet, in knowing Christ, we know the Godlikest thing in God.

Apart from Christ, the intuition of God is not to be had. Historically the Fatherhood has not in any proper sense been believed outside of the circle of Christ's influence. And even if the doctrine could be speculatively arrived at, it would

remain a mere speculation. Communion with God is possible only on God's initiative; and Christ it is who leads us into fellowship with God. For Christ as the Son demonstrates (to faith) the living presence of the heavenly Father, as well as His readiness to forgive and bless His children.

(III.) We must now ask, What is the result of Christ's work of revelation? To whom is revelation made?

We answer: The revelations made by Christ take the form of personal convictions in the heart of the Christian. While we believe Christianity to be, first and last, a social or impersonal life, we recognise that its beliefs have their seat in the secret of the heart, from which point of vantage they will rule man and the world. Those who underrate Christ's prophetic office misunderstand the subject about which they talk so glibly. Revelation does not consist of doctrines or notions, but of a beatific vision of God. It is one phase of the Christian religion as a whole. Whoever truly knows God truly repents, and loves and serves God, as well as believes in Him. Other elements in religion are transformations of this element, but not supplements to it. Conviction then must not be confused with opinion; current opinion at its best—in the shape, say, of valid Christian doctrine—is only an imperfect intellectual utterance of what lies deeper than intellect, an imperfect intellectual witness to what passes beyond intellect.

To this, among other causes, is referable the saplessness of apologetic writing. I know well that we cannot do without the Evidences; still, we are left very poor if we are exclusively or predominantly furnished with arguments, mere arguments, in support of the Gospel. Such balancing of probabilities is at best a preliminary step; and when one breath of the Spirit of God comes upon the soul, our soul is, at it were, translated into a different region, where we do not speculate or infer, but where we feel and see our guilt, shame, duty,—God's mercy and love.

Such vital conviction is spoken of by St. John as an eternal life; by St. Paul it is described as the faith which justifies.

There are two distinct reasons why justification is attributed to this faith. First, because it is, itself, the right attitude of the human spirit towards God,—and, as such, the spring out of which all right conduct may be expected to flow.¹ If man were an uncreated, self-subsistent being, it would be ridiculous to refer his goodness radically to something outside of himself. But man is a derivative being, conditioned by antecedent forces—by nature, by circumstances, by his fellow-men, by his own ill-comprehended mental and bodily tendencies. All these things together press upon man with wellnigh irresistible force. And what the Gospel does is to reveal, in this mysterious all-controlling pressure, the face of God our Father—who is not without us only, but within us too; not in our tendencies merely, but in our character, our will, our self. Thankful belief of this, willing trust in the revealed power of our Father, makes us Christians. And, being made Christians, we are not thereby enslaved to the all-compassing power of God, but set free from nature. Our spirit of faith is a spirit of adoption; and we know with a confidence deeper than argument that we are free in proportion as we serve God—that we are at home in His presence—that we have come to ourselves just when He permeates and pervades us. This is our freedom. ‘Our wills are ours, to make them thine.’ But secondly, justifying faith is so called for this reason also, because confidence towards God, in its normal state of health, carries in its own bosom its witness, or the assurance of our acceptance with Him.² Faith is, from this point of view, the realisation in our own consciousness of that acceptance with God which ideally held good for us before we repented and believed—before we were even born—in God’s gracious purpose, and in Christ as the fulfilment of God’s purpose. Mankind are accepted in Christ, *qua* repentant and *qua* believing. Faith puts one into the number of those for whom Christ’s revelations really avail. But let it be remembered that there is a faith which is no bigger than a grain

¹ So Ritschl, M’Leod Campbell, Erskine (*Brazen Serpent*).

² So Erskine (*Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel*).

of mustard seed ; and that there is another faith, which keeps perpetually prating 'Lord, Lord,' and which goes for nothing with the Master Himself.

Adoption, or justification by faith, as above interpreted, is the necessary germinal form of spiritual religion. Unfallen or redeemed, finite man, growing up into his destiny of blessedness through the historical process of this world, could only commune with God by faith, could only be right with God on the ground of faith. In other words, spiritual religion implies a higher than the legal conception of God. True religion as such rests on the fact that God's chief interest with us is not to approve us on the ground of merit, or to condemn us for sin, but that 'the Father seeketh true worshippers to worship Him.' Our acceptance by faith implies that God's procedure rests upon the laws of our nature, not upon His arbitrary will. A whole moral apologetic and moral theory of the Atonement are latent in the Pauline doctrine of justification. If it were not so, that doctrine would be shorn of its power.

Apart from the intrusion of sin, the probability of God and of immortality ought to have been enough for men. But, apart from the redemptive and remedial aspects of God's grace, the moral and religious progress of unfallen mankind would assuredly have been crowned either by a revelation of God's Fatherhood or by something analogous to the revelation of Fatherhood. May we go further? May we assert that the spiritual history of a sinless earth must have been crowned by a revelation of the Father through His only begotten Son? I conceive that we have no materials for answering that question. Christ's work is not a merely remedial scheme; it is the perfecting of man's fellowship with God and with his fellow-men, in such a way as makes the blessed life available for sinners. It is impossible for us to disentangle the two elements of the Gospel—its remedial character, and its character as introducing to the world the human ideal. Hence we cannot say how God's love would have fully disclosed itself to unfallen mankind. We do not need to answer such questions.

It is enough if our own faith finds its welcome, its home, its remedy, its ideal hopes, its all, in Jesus Christ.

I have no doubt this interpretation of justification by faith will seem strange to those who have been accustomed to regard faith as a purely exceptional basis of religion substituted for the unattainable basis of justification by works. Nevertheless I think the view given above will commend itself on reflection. Legalism is far from being the natural type of religion: it is a dummy religion, which answers none of the ends of true spiritual piety. And, when St. Paul indicates in a word that *guilty* man is justified by faith, he does so merely by styling the faith that saves 'faith in Him that justifieth the ungodly.' There must therefore be confession of sin on the part of the guilty man who is saved by faith. But the faith which justifies and which saves is essentially faith in God as the Father—faith in His character—faith in His will to bless us—faith in His supplying, by channels that we cannot trace out, needs of ours that we can never fathom. Saving faith is not essentially faith in a particular theory of the Atonement, but in the character of God as Christ reveals it.

The social product of revelation—the generic subject of faith—I take to be the Church. By this of course is meant 'the invisible Church' of theologians, *i.e.* the Church according to its ideal, in contradistinction to any empirical society. There are traitors in every camp; and there are stray Christians outside all the Churches. These are anomalies such as abound on every side, to remind us that we are only embryo saints, that we live in a world of unfinished processes, and, worse, that our sainthood is tarnished with guilt. But ideally the Church consists of the whole company of those who 'know the Father'—whose consciences have been quickened, and who, recognising God's purpose in the world, thankfully and humbly submit themselves to it.

That we should know the Father is an end in itself. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' We touch the goal

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of life when our spirit embraces by faith the spirit of our Father. But this Christian end, like all the ends of human life, has to be progressively realised ; and further, it has to be communicated to others. And, therefore, all along the course of life we are accompanied by the public worship of God, to serve (among other things) as a witness to the Divine realities which underlie our life. Reminding each other of our common faith, we are strengthened to live according to the ideals of the faith ; and thus the Church 'maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.' And the same witness which the Church addresses to her own members appeals to the unbelieving or indifferent world outside. God is ; Christ is near ; all blessedness comes by His Spirit ; His authority lies upon us all. The Church is the unworthy witness to these truths.

With this witness-bearing the Church's duty to the world, in the matter of its convictions, comes to an end. Truth cannot be forced on the unwilling. We cannot take their minds into our hands and readjust their convictions or their affections. Having borne witness, we must leave the issue to God. Not that this encourages a lukewarm spirit towards irreligious men. Christian witness-bearing is an infinite task, covering the whole of life. We can never do too much, intensively, towards its accomplishment. We can never do enough. Worldly men will test our faith by what they see in our behaviour. And the blessedness of every Christian is dependent on the spread of God's blessing to other men. Still, it is important to realise that our task towards unbelieving minds is only to bear witness—along with Christ, along with Christ's spirit ; to make the deep hidden current of human history *towards* God a little more visible and credible ; to help others to hear that voice which we profess to hear daily, and daily to obey.

Very specially must every Christian heart yearn over those young souls who have to make the transition from religion at second-hand to personal religion. The terrible uncertainty of life—how can one bear it? How can one mitigate it? We

cannot abrogate those trials and dangers which are part of God's great gift of human life. Every man must bear his own burden; every soul must win its own crown. But if Christian people were not only sound dogmatists, but sound Christians, visibly acting on high principle, always responding to the claims of honour, secure against petty temptations, borne along by a joyous energy of self-sacrifice—then their hidden life would be manifest in its fruits, and Christ, the light and joy of all true human life, would be a reality to the children of the Church.

The worst barrier to faith is human sin. But Christ has dealt with sin. Thus His revelations pass into a work of reconciliation; and the Christian faith which we have been studying transforms itself into repentance.

IV.

The doctrine of sin is one of the boundary marks between religion and morals. The very name warns us that we are passing into a new country. A guilty world, a lost world, a world averse to God and its own blessedness, are conceptions with which the moralist can hardly be induced to meddle. Yet these conceptions are unavoidable. We strike here, indeed, upon a mystery. Universality seems to imply necessity; and it is true that 'all have sinned:' yet guilt implies responsibility, and responsibility involves freedom. If, then, we will not pay ourselves with words, and accept explanations which explain nothing—theories of imputation and the like—we must admit a mystery here, a mystery of guilt and darkness; depravity, sinful depravity, pervading a whole world. I know not whether it is any alleviation of the mystery to point out that this belief is not an intuition, but an ever-recurring experience. Such, at any rate, is the fact. I will only add here that a belief in the fall of Satan does not diminish by a feather's weight the mysteries connected with

the fall of man. The origin of evil in our race, the evil with which we have to do, is not made less wonderful or inscrutable by the assumption of pre-existing evil. *Born sinful*—the paradox is almost shocking. But, while we need not attribute responsibility to unconscious babes, any more than to imbeciles, we know that infants are certain to grow up—guilty. That is a fact, however dark. Religion cannot allow the fact to be explained away.

On the other hand, morality insists that human beings, even if guilty, are responsible; that, being responsible, they must have opportunity of reaching the goal of life. A literally dead man could be no subject of condemnation; unless we were to impute to God the paltry malice of those who unearthed and gibbeted the bones of Cromwell. Fact, which shows that there is bad in all good men, also shows that there is some good in the worst men. Conscience, which testifies that we are all under condemnation, testifies no less that we are all under probation; it never ceases to speak of duty. We do not argue thus in order that we may extenuate man's guilt, but for the truth's sake. Even when all this is allowed, guilt remains in its black malignity. For God requires entire purity; and that is a proof, not of legal rigour, but of grace and love. A God who tolerated any sin could not be a refuge for us, and a strength against ourselves, as our God is. Further; whatever may be the case with other sinners (if such there be) in other worlds, with us every sin reacts upon the character as a permanent tendency to evil. Hence man is a divided nature,—partly good and Godlike, partly depraved; so good, he ought to be an angel; so bad, he might sink into a devil; a nature in unstable equilibrium—one in whom the light and the dark refuse to blend into any neutral tint: a nature to whom healing and wholeness can only come from God, if He be pleased to wipe away our guilt, and to fashion us anew as children of obedience. If God refused to heal us, He might condemn and punish us for our guilt—might sweep us out of being as moral failures; He could not go on commanding and

inviting us to serve Him. He does so go on; and morality thus becomes a pledge of grace. Our probation consists in the building up of our character on one side or on the other—for God or for sin. But to the end, while life continues, we are still in the making; the good man may still lapse from grace; the vilest may still, by God's mercy, repent and live. Of this we are sure, while life continues. But, in such a life as ours, Christ can only create a saving communion of men with God if He is authorised to convey to men the forgiveness of sin.

The evil of guilt may be expected to show itself, occasionally, in a sense of burden and shame, but more usually in the worse form of indifference to our state. Many religions seem at one time or another to have struck deep notes of penitence out of certain souls. Sacrifice is frequently an expression of repentance, and a method for alleviating the sense of guilt. But sacrifice is in its nature a temporary expedient, sure to be outgrown. And the ethnic religions kept up no steady pressure upon the human conscience. The first work of the Holy Spirit therefore is to convince the world of sin. In the Old Testament religion we have, of course, every form of spiritual experience more or less fully represented. When Christ came, however, the ruling type of piety does not seem to have been painfully sensitive to sin. It seems to have been a rather blunt, not unhealthy, half-legal system, 'walking in the ordinances of the Lord without blame.' But the experience of the law which the Apostle Paul relates shows how some men, at any rate, were being made ready to welcome the gospel of the Atonement by learning their helplessness and guilt.

Apart from religion, strictly so called, human life has lesser economies of repentance and forgiveness in friendship, and especially in the family. Although human souls seem heavily weighted by being steeped from their birth, not only in the heredity, but in the habits and example of sin, yet, in all probability, most men gain much from their childhood. Normally,

human life begins in obedience, in reverence, in the confession of evil, in seeking and finding forgiveness. 'Family affection is naturally Christian';¹ and it keeps the moral nature green both in parents and in children. Friendship and family life must not be left out of view when we are considering the moral elements in the providential preparation for Christ.² They take us 'out of ourselves'; they habituate us to repentance and confession. On the other hand, the sense of sin was probably obscure and fitful, repentance was probably shallow and imperfect, outside of the influence of Jesus Christ. He first, who revealed the Father, convinced the world of sin. Repentance, not of this particular trespass or that, but of all one is, of all one has become, is a Christian grace.

First, then, we may say of Christ's forgiveness that it begins by revealing our sin. Or, it begins by revealing God's justice, and by uttering in our consciences His condemnation of sin. Christ makes this revelation in many ways. He makes it by His personal character—by His very presence in the world. The Sinless One leaves us 'no cloak for our sin.' Christ, and Christ alone, is able to give this revelation of evil. But further, the whole development of Christ's history is a further revelation of evil. Good as such, and sin as such, are there seen in conflict. And the whole evil of our sin is made plain to us when we perceive that we are sinning against love. The Cross is the supreme manifestation of sin. There we see sin, not only in outward acts, but in Christ's exceeding sickness and sorrow under the burden of the world's wickedness. At the cross of Christ believers have always learned how evil sin is. Whether or not their doctrinal explanations of their own experience have been correct, the experience itself has been God-given, spiritual, saving. Christ has convinced them of sin. Christ condemns not His immediate persecutors but the

¹ 'Family affection in some form is the almost indispensable root of Christianity. This family affection is rightly called natural; that is to say, it will come of itself if it be not artificially hindered.'—*Ecce Homo*, xviii. p. 204.

² Compare the unusual warmth of Aristotle's language in describing friendship.

whole world. He reveals our malady as not weakness or accident but guilt.

But, secondly, Christ reveals the forgiveness of sin ; or He reveals the grace of God, beyond and above His justice. And this revelation of forgiveness inheres peculiarly in Christ Himself. God is in Christ ; grace flows through Christ. For grace comes to those who accept Christ's testimony against themselves, and look for mercy to God's undeserved grace ; who confess sin, and confess Christ. Christ's very presence in the world implies the forgiveness as well as the condemnation of sin. Still more, Christ's victory over sin at His death, 'convinces the world of righteousness' ; His death 'for our offences,' followed by His resurrection 'for our justification.' We know that we are pardoned when we see Christ, the unchanging friend of sinners, crowned with glory and honour, 'that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.' It is at the cross of Christ that we are forgiven ; and forgiveness is for the whole world. The forgiveness of God is full, free, immediate. This is the testimony both of the Bible and of experience ; and such liberation of the conscience is needed alike for religious joy and for moral strength. Legalism denies this. Religion of the Roman Catholic type would make grace be appropriated bit by bit. It is true that we must make God's grace our own ; but we cannot appropriate it piecemeal. The age of enlightenment is equally opposed to fulness of forgiveness, though on different grounds. Even so noble a representative of its teaching as Thomas Erskine holds that God in every case inflicts the due penalty in all its fulness upon sin, while yet reclaiming the sinner even by means of punishment. We agree that God punishes every sin ; we agree that punishment is controlled for spiritual and gracious ends in all repentant hearts ; but we cannot admit that there is a definite quantum of punishment due to each sin, or, if there is, that it can be exhausted by the redeemed sinner. The Bible teaches,—and conscience teaches,—retribution ; but the Bible teaches, at least as clearly, free forgiveness.

And true Christianity laughs at the fear of encouraging sin. 'Thou hast slain for him the fatted calf.' The illusion of forgiveness may encourage men in sin, but never the reality. There is a Divine glory in forgiveness that melts and breaks the heart. For God's 'ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts,' just because 'as the heaven is higher than the earth, so God's ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts.'

As the bearer of forgiveness, Christ may be regarded as the author and giver of repentance. Repentance is the subjective side of the forgiveness of sins. It is one facet of that unanalysable Divine-human experience in which the sinner, while bewailing his sin—because bewailing his sin—knows himself reconciled to the God of righteousness. When Christ is spoken of as a propitiation for sin, the phrase is elliptical; we must understand that Christ is a remedy for sin, inasmuch as, having conquered sin, He is mighty to transform all sinners who submit themselves to Him. Forgiveness can only be represented as a conditional gift. Christ is our Redeemer in an absolute sense: He bestows moral light and moral strength, and bestows these on the guilty; but the announcement of forgiveness can only be made to repentance and faith. We may either say that only the repentant are forgiven, or that only the forgiven can repent. To exhibit God's character in all its stern severity is not a condition precedent of the forgiveness of sins; it is an inherent element in the forgiveness of sins. To have one's heart broken because of sin is not a condition precedent of being forgiven; it is itself forgiveness—forgiveness which separates the sinner from his past self as far as the east is from the west. We ourselves forgive one another, because we regard wrong done us as due to weakness, not to a settled ill-will, and because we believe in our friend's sorrow, and because we see in him a wish to do better. Therefore we forgive him, not in cold or hollow words, but by taking him back to our hearts to be a friend to us. So does God forgive us, by admitting

us not merely to amnesty, but to fellowship. And I cannot but hold that God, too, forgives on the ground that our fall may be retrieved, that we are learning to sorrow for it, that we are learning to aim at a better life. Although, at the same time, in God's dealings with us, God's grace must beget the better will even in its first stirrings; and the effort to separate God's part from our part is of very limited signification. For in this experience very peculiarly 'all things are of God.'

Once more: repentance, which is the subjective side of the forgiveness of sins, is equivalent to regeneration. I have not here, at this point, to trace out the after effects of such begetting into new life. But it is important to notice that the forgiving grace of God, which passes by transgression and sin, in the very act of doing so creates a clean heart within the sinner. That God should forgive the unrepentant is eternally unthinkable: is not merely unworthy of God, but in the nature of things impossible. Communion with God, such as necessarily goes with forgiveness, implies new spiritual affections, which may fitly be described as due to regeneration. Let us steadily translate that term into its moral equivalent. No theological term has more need of the reviving which it may get in that way. Regeneration is just repentance; repentance is just regeneration. The moral term will not allow us to dispense with the more purely religious; we see truth flash by flash; but we need one flash as much as the other. And as repentance is lifelong, so is regeneration lifelong, perhaps longer than this life, till character is fixed and built up in Christ's image.

An atonement of this kind—a moral atonement, offered to repentance—is essentially a forgiveness which covers the whole world. Limited atonement, whatever it be, is not moral; 'an arbitrary act cannot reveal character.'¹ Whether all men or only some seek and find forgiveness, yet none could enter into the life of reconciliation were not that life in its own nature, and by God's will, a life for all. We cannot say of this

¹ Campbell, *Atonement*, ch. iii. p. 55.

atonement how much repentance is necessary in order to share it. We are in a region where such legal questions are inappropriate, where quantitative tests are out of place. Salvation is possible for men just because our God and Father is not one who exacts the utmost from men, but one who gives freely. The only possible measure of our repentance is, that we must grieve as much as the Spirit of our Father teaches us to do; that we must show the reality of our change of mind by a life-long change of affections and of practice. 'If we confess our sin'—that is the only condition of forgiveness stated in the Bible. 'If we confess Jesus as Lord, believing in our hearts in His resurrection'—that is the only condition of final salvation stated in the Bible.

Repentance, the correlate in us of Christ's atonement, is itself a manifestation of faith. We believe in God's testimony addressed to us; we believe in our ill desert; we believe in the fatherliness of the Father, working through revelation of the Son. So believing, we repent; and so repenting we are saved. 'That God is the Father of our spirits is the ultimate truth on which faith must here ultimately rest.'¹ Those who speak of a 'vague quality of fatherliness' are quarrelling with the eternal purpose of God's grace—with what makes God to be God.

On this theory of the Atonement, God safeguards the interests of righteousness by leading to repentance all who come to enjoy forgiveness,—or, in other words, by making in Christ Jesus a complete disclosure of His nature and character as not only just but gracious; as necessarily in the first place just, and so condemning sin, but secondly gracious, and so calling sinners to repentance; or, yet again, by the very nature of the salvation Christ offers. And, if all these fail, God safeguards righteousness by the uninterrupted working of His moral law. As the evil of sin is disclosed only by Christ, and as the full compass of the law of righteousness is disclosed only by Christ—in other words, as Christ alone reveals the Father

¹ Campbell, title of ch. xv.

—so forgiveness is to be found only in Christ: there is no other atonement. God has willed that this should be. We are not, perhaps, warranted in affirming that God could not forgive any sin to any sinner except through Christ's blood. Neither are we warranted in affirming that God could forgive sin otherwise. The remedy, which a miracle of love has brought within our reach, is a solitary phenomenon. We do not fully know what is morally presupposed in redemption beyond this, that the whole of what a moral redemption presupposes is found in Christ. And when we see how Christ works repentance and bestows forgiveness, viz. by a manifestation of the whole mind or nature or character of God, we shall hesitate to say that God could forgive the rebel world unless by the Son revealing the Father. The revelation is made in a human life; for God will conquer sin (for gracious ends) by moral means, and not by the bare exertion of His omnipotence; God will redeem human history—will rescue, perfect, glorify the moral progress of mankind in His favour. Hence God hangs all human lives upon the human life of Jesus Christ, in token that all men are absolutely dependent on God, and in token that we are, not legally only, in point of guilt, but also morally, in point of the moral task, *solidaires*. Christ, representing both God and man, achieving the central moral task of human history, binds us together afresh as brethren for His name's sake, and as sons of His Father and God. The whole of His work is a sacrifice acceptable to God, atoning for sin, and consecrating the redeemed to new service.

But, it may be said, if this is all the Atonement requires, why must Christ die? Is there not (it may be said) a special truth about the Atonement—Paul's addition to Christ's gospel—which we cannot ignore? To me it seems that, though good men strangely so speak, not even St. Paul can add anything to the foundations of faith; and that, if Paul dwells more than Jesus's own words do upon the death of Christ, that is because Paul is teaching subsequently to the event, and our Lord is teaching before it. The fact itself was what constituted the

momentous change in men's thoughts. The individual believer, let it be remembered, is not required to assent to any *rational* of the Atonement, but only to confess Christ as His Saviour. Yet the fact of the Atonement told on men's minds; and the fact came by God's will. It was the morally natural outcome of Christ's work in a world of sinners; it was the complete manifestation of sin—and the knowledge of sin is not an accidental, but an intrinsic element in our redemption; it was the supreme manifestation of Christ's faithfulness and love; and love is the constraining, redeeming power by eminence. As in all respects, so in dealing with the guilt of sin, Christ's cross knit up the meaning of His whole life, and re-emphasised it. It is true that, on our view, Christ's death would be no atonement apart from His Resurrection. If the Atonement be the conflict of sin and righteousness on the stage of history, then righteousness must visibly as well as invisibly triumph—must carry its manifest attestation from God. But the New Testament itself always treats the Resurrection as a part of the Atonement. Thus we are encouraged to regard Christ's work as not merely the procuring but the assuring of forgiveness.

In the New Testament the work of Christ is generally spoken of as having been *a sacrifice*; more exactly, *a sin-offering*. To Jews, and even to Pagans, accustomed, as they were to animal sacrifice, this language must have seemed more satisfactory than it proves to us. Yet they had to modify the idea of sacrifice in transferring it to Christ. The thought on which the author of Hebrews dwells so exultingly—that Christ offered His sacrifice 'once for all'—had no prototype in Jewish or Pagan ritual. But, unless we are to pour contempt on the religious consciousness of the whole human race, we must respect the craving for sacrifice, however we interpret it, and we must admit the justice of finding the antitype of that human craving in God's gift to the world. Sin-offering, at any rate, expresses the sense of sin,—the looking to God for deliverance,—the acceptance of the way which God has appointed for our

escape,—trust in God that, according to His promise, He forgives and saves as He alone can. All these thoughts enter into the Christian's attitude towards His crucified Saviour. What is revealed is not only the truth that God is ready to forgive men if men repent, but the fact that God is forgiving men, through Christ, and that men, moved by Christ, are repenting and turning to God. Christ's forgiveness is the only authoritative forgiveness; the only repentance based on a true knowledge of the Father is the Christian's repentance. And the whole world's forgiveness comes through the fact of Christ's dealing with sin on God's behalf. This fact marks the transition from the world's condemnation under guilt to its acceptance through Christ,—a transition mirrored in the life of many an individual child of God. It is on this fact of sin-bearing, with all it implies, that God proceeds when He extends His mercy to the world. This fact is as important for the historical realisation of the kingdom of God, as the principle of God's love is for the necessary foreordination of a kingdom of grace in God's eternal counsel. And the fact of Christ crucified and risen—the 'finished work'—is the fact to which many a simple heart, unlearned but loving, clings for life and strength. By such direct and unperplexed faith, the joy and the thankfulness of New Testament times are sometimes rivalled even in our own day. Strongly as we must insist on the unfinished continuous process of God's grace, for which we live, let us never forget that the source of our repentance, of our faith, of our victory, is in Christ and in His victory. 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' Very specially the gladness of faith, upon which so much depends, is itself dependent upon the simplicity of our faith. And therefore Christ's work, which in one aspect of it is the abrogation of sacrifice, may be described, from another point of view, as the solitary acceptable and efficient sacrifice for sin ever offered to God on this earth.

The old theology has a far more definite *rationale* of the sacrificial death of Christ. According to it, every sin doomed

the sinner to eternal destruction; the animal victim, in sacrifice, was a substitute for the sinner, and its physical destruction excused him from suffering the curse of God's law; while Christ, the one true sacrifice for sin, had to suffer death as an equivalent for the eternal perdition of His people. There is an apparent clearness about these thoughts which is always likely to give them a certain popularity. But, even if we accept the enormous assumptions of the orthodox scheme, its working out is full of difficulties. First of all, it is very doubtful whether we have a right to speak of punishment as *satisfying* Divine justice. Punishment vindicates justice, or reasserts justice, against the lawbreaker, but it cannot put him right with justice; to think that it can is an immoral fallacy. The only thing that satisfies legal justice is punctual obedience to the law; with that, justice is, at least, not dissatisfied. But if such a thing is possible as satisfaction to the Lawgiver in the case of a lawbreaker—if we live in a world where 'men may rise by stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things,'—in a world where it can be affirmed that 'repentance is better than innocence'¹—that can only be because, in the Lawgiver, there are other qualities besides forensic justice; because His grace, and His love, seek and find a satisfaction which we only mislead ourselves by trying to describe in terms of criminal law;—because, as the most Judaic spirit among all the New Testament writers has expressed it, 'mercy GLORIETH AGAINST judgment.' And for this reason the higher justice *is* satisfied by heartfelt repentance. Secondly: Old Testament scholars generally admit that sacrifice, whatever it meant, did not denote penal substitution. Sacrifice, as a gracious provision, and the cutting off of sinners as an act of justice, have nothing to do with each other in the Old Testa-

¹ 'The aphorism that "repentance is better than innocence" was quoted as the kernel of Dr. Bruce's preaching, and as affording one ray of light as to the permission of evil and the theory of optimism. "Well, there is great truth in that. I have no objection to Dr. Bruce's kernel; but I find that kernel enclosed in a shell, and the shell is 'as far as man is concerned.'"—*Colloquia Peripatetica*.

ment. If St. Paul thought sacrifice meant penal substitution, he was in error; but it is very doubtful whether St. Paul made any such error. And all sacrificial metaphors in the New Testament are best regarded as an endeavour to bear witness to a fact which is independent of special theories—the fact of Christ's atoning death. Thirdly: the theory of penal substitution seems inconsistent with the natural elements of the religious consciousness. Our relations to God on that theory are due to accidental facts, which God 'might justly' have arranged otherwise had He so willed. Redemption is a 'moral miracle,'—i.e. as exceptional in the moral order as miracle is in the physical. In other words, it is a moral *tour de force*. For God to forgive sin needs a series of miracles: that God should destroy sinners is obvious and natural. Such a being is not the God of the Bible, who 'delights in mercy.' Fourthly: the theory cannot be said to explain how forgiveness leads on to a life of obedience. On the contrary, the theory is hard pressed, perhaps overtaken, to prove that the gospel of grace does not encourage sin. If man is treated as the abstraction of guilt, and if the work of Christ is essentially the procuring of an amnesty, it does not appear how the Christian can lead a better life, or how the gospel amnesty should induce him to do so. And thus we see the falsity of the usual orthodox treatment of moral theories of the Atonement—that they are true, yet only a sort of appendix to the deeper truth of penal substitution, which necessarily leads on to them. Far from that; penal substitution can never set in motion those moral ideas which confessedly operate in the Christian life. God forgives me, because He has been able to wreak 'the revenges of His wrath' upon a substitute. This may conceivably awaken my gratitude; the religious affections are capable of strange developments; but my gratitude cannot be regarded, on the theory in question, as the spring of my new life. The real spring of my new life is an arbitrary operation of the Holy Spirit, which merely coincides with my 'assent to' the substitutionary 'arrangement.' And if gratitude for pardon

won by a substitute were the spring of a new life, then my new life would still be unmoral. Moral law has been suspended in my case. It is for that I am supposed to be thankful. Fifthly: there are all the logical difficulties of the theory, which will hardly be denied, though we may be commanded to disregard them in obedience to authority. Sixthly, the view of God's nature presented to us is hard to receive. That view is—to use a rather coarse but effective expression—a 'battle of Divine attributes.' I have heard it alleged in defence that we see a battle of attributes in every human parent who reluctantly punishes a favourite child. But observe the differences. The human father passes through a struggle, because he is human, and therefore weak; but the end of the struggle is peace. Love consents to justice, when the child is punished; punishment expresses love as well as justice. And justice consents to love when the child is afterwards forgiven and taken back to favour. There is no schism in the father's moral nature. Whereas in God we are supposed to see the alternation of a mercy which knows no justice, with a justice which knows no mercy. A real human analogy to the theological 'battle of the attributes' would be somewhat as follows:—A distracted father knows he is bound to punish a favourite sickly child, but cannot bring himself to do it, when an elder child says, 'Father, don't beat him—beat me!' The father turns aside for a moment, to wipe away a furtive tear, then seizes the elder boy with every appearance of fury, and beats him—shall we say, within an inch of his life?—after which he turns to the guilty younger boy with a smile of ineffable love and exclaims, 'Now, my child, your elder brother has borne your punishment, and I may justly forgive you! Come to my arms!' Would such a procedure awaken reverence and wondering thankfulness, or should we think the man mad? Could the younger child trust such a father? Why then should we think that God gains anything by such make-believe punishment? Let the orthodox beware of trying to offer us moral analogies from human lives for a transaction

which, as they describe it, is morally unthinkable. God, we are sure, is eternally reconciled to Himself in the purpose of His love; and Christ's work is the revelation and realisation of that eternal purpose—but not its manufacture. There is a price paid—to the moral order of God's world, we may say; that is, to God Himself, under the special forms in which His character operates in the world; but no price is or can be paid to an extra-moral or merely legal order of things. That God did redeem us—that God did pay a price—means that, for moral ends, God elected to work by moral influences rather than to exert His bare omnipotence. The orthodox tradition is not ethical; for ethic teaches that it is *morally right to forgive those who repent*—a higher point of view surely than the legal position that it is *legally unjust to try the same culprit twice for the same crime* [add, *on the same evidence*]. The orthodox point of view is not legal; for law knows nothing of the transference of accountability from one subject to another. It is not a point of view which mingles law and morality; for, though love shares the necessities of others, it cannot share their demerits without denying itself. It is simply a commercial point of view. Pecuniary debt is the one thing—falling as it does entirely outside of the moral personality—which can be passed from hand to hand, as punishment is passed on according to the orthodox theory. I leave it to Christian readers to judge whether this commercial interpretation of God's ways in grace is really glorifying to our Father in heaven. Our obligations to Christ are utter and absolute. If it helped, we should willingly say that He purchased pardon for us by enduring punishment. We avoid saying that, not because we think lightly of human sin,—not because we think proudly of our own merits—not because we have low views of Christ. These are irrelevant slanders, with which theologians, baffled in argument, try to make good an untenable position. We avoid saying that Christ purchased pardon from God's law, because we cannot find in that belief any meaning which is compatible with worthy thoughts of man or of God, of guilt or

of salvation. We do affirm that redemption comes to us from Christ's work, and from Christ alone.

Besides the orthodox tradition, there is another 'objective' theory of Christ's work—the penal example theory. It may be stated as follows:—that, in order to persuade us of the invariable connection between sin and punishment, God inflicted something which was not punishment upon One who had not sinned, before proceeding to remit punishment in the case of those who had sinned. This appears to me the most extraordinary of all extraordinary Theodicies. I shall not, however, criticise it, further than to say, that if God had chosen so to behave, He would not, I think, have allowed Himself to be *found out* by Dr. Wardlaw and Dr. Pye Smith.

The result of Christ's forgiveness, or of His sin-offering, we find partly in the existence of penitent believers, partly in the existence of a Church 'full of the forgiveness of sins.' But, beyond these facts of direct experience, the Christian faith affirms that the world is reconciled to God by the death of His Son. It may be that this universal reconciliation will never issue in universal holiness; yet belief in it is the moving power of every approach towards that goal; and accordingly, individual saints and the Church as a whole are regarded as witnesses of a wider blessing—'a kind of first-fruits of God's creatures.'

One thing is left in the lives of the reconciled which we might have expected to see removed from them. The elementary moral conception of human life found in the Old Testament treats sorrow, and especially death, as the punishment of sin. Gradually, however, in the Old Testament, the connection between particular sorrows and a belief in particular sins is relaxed; and finally in Christ, the Man of Sorrows, the connection is annulled. Sorrow in His life is not penal—does not separate from God—becomes a means of moral discipline and an opportunity for glorifying God. So, as Christ sorrowed and died, we also sorrow and die, yet 'in all

these things are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.²

To study this in detail will be the object of our next section. Faith, which has already transformed itself into repentance before our eyes, must now prove to us that it includes patience.

V.

Human nature is characterised, on the practical side, by always seeking conscious ends, of one kind or another. These are naturally very miscellaneous in their detail; being in many cases constituted, and in many more cases modified, by our physical necessities. But, running through almost all human activities, and determining, if not the activities themselves, yet the manner of their operation, there are two great ruling conceptions—the conception of duty, and the conception of happiness. It is with the second that we have to do at this moment. Though it must rank as inferior to the conception of duty, yet it is a thought from which no living human creature can shake himself free. And it is evidently felt by us all to be morally unobjectionable, and therefore in itself desirable; for, in our better moments, we all try to make other people happy. Even the rigorous Kant requires me to endeavour after ‘my neighbour’s’ happiness. Thus we are encouraged to receive the obvious teaching of consciousness, that happiness—or even its unit, pleasure—is *ceteris paribus* desirable. It is a symptom of health—physical, psychical, moral.

The conditions of happiness are determined, partly by our own actions, partly by the actions of others, and partly by circumstance. Hence the search for happiness is embarrassed by the fact that so few of its conditions are under our own control. The richest elements of happiness are found in our relation to our fellow-men or to God. But more than this; experience proves that, even under favourable circumstances, the search for happiness does not lead to happiness. For there is a contradiction between our permanent nature as rational creatures and the moments out of which experience is built up, and in

which the feeling of satisfaction is enjoyed. Happiness is not suited to serve as the chief end of life. It is only a secondary aspect of the one end, truly so called, at which all human life aims. Besides, our pleasure must often be subordinated to necessity; it ought always to be subordinated to duty. In fine, we come to discover that happiness must not be aimed at; that those who seek it fail to find it; that, while we instinctively wish it, and expect it, we can only have it, if at all, as a gift. In this belief the modern Utilitarian finds himself driven back, in spite of his premises, on the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. Happiness may come to us 'by the way'; if we are seeking worthy ends, these lesser things 'shall be added unto us.'

We thus discover another important element in religion. If for happiness, that essential of healthy life, we are pensioners on the bounty of the 'not ourselves,' then our thirst for happiness is an unconscious thirst for God. And to find true happiness is to recognise God as the author of all the elements of our emotional world,—to meet God in circumstance, God in our brethren, God in ourselves—to live in God, and God in us. Sorrow will be transfigured, if God is in it. Disappointment reveals the personal will of God crossing ours. If this God is truly seeking us, in order to find and bless us,—then happiness is assured to us; but then only.

Over-against the postulate of happiness rises, at all different stages of man's relation to God, the fact of human sorrow. It is not indeed a universal fact. God has not cut off the entire supply of any one of His best gifts from the fallen race of man; and thus, in the human world, there is a large amount of sporadic happiness, not a little of which is exquisitely sweet. Yet the world as a whole is a sad place. When the pressure of unhappiness tells upon communities of men, we may fitly explain it by blaming, partly their ignorance of God, partly their selfishness. If mankind were truly unselfish (which can only be by God's indwelling), then misery would be dried up—in part by the succours which the miserable would receive from

their fellow-men, and, yet more, by the wider air and better hope which brotherly love would bring with it into the hearts of the jaded and wretched themselves. So we may account for the unhappiness of communities of men. But it is obvious that there are individual cases of suffering where such reasonings as these entirely fail us. There are tragedies full, and overfull of pathos—stretching up, on one range of misery after another. There is the dull, heavy weight of care, the dreary lot of the oppressed, the ‘joyless joy’ of the degraded. As a whole, the world is a place of misery. How does the Gospel deal with this fact?

Legalism unravels the mystery with comparative ease; and legalism is of importance because, on the whole, the Old Testament adopts a legalist attitude on this question. It is plain that, granted the existence of sin, the existence of suffering is implied in the justice of God, and not only in God’s justice but in every one of His moral qualities. A perfectly placid world of wrongdoers would be a moral monstrosity, far more hideous than the worst parts of this earth. In principle, therefore, human suffering is nowise mysterious; but in the detailed course of its incidence it is an exceedingly great mystery. And legalism refuses to admit difficulties. It considers God merely as a lawgiver, commanding, rewarding, punishing; it regards all sorrow as penal. The wisdom of early ages held that ‘the righteous’ is ‘recompensed in the earth,’ and ‘much more the wicked and the sinner.’ They did not say of a man ‘he died suddenly,’ but ‘God killed him,’ or even ‘God was angry and killed him’ (*cf.* Gen. xxxviii. 7). This explanation, however, broke down in the using: it did not prove true that suffering coincided with special wickedness. Hence higher doctrines even in the Old Testament—doctrines of Divine chastening, ideas of vicarious suffering, and also—in part, it is probable, from this experience—hopes of immortality. These stages in God’s education of His people imply the loosening of the connection believed to exist between sin and suffering—imply the gradual, though only partial,

transcending of legalism, and attainment of an ethical standpoint.

A certain school of Christian theology tries to undo this work, and to revert to legalism. It intensifies the doctrine of sin until all difficulties connected with the amount of suffering in this world disappear: till it seems that God's justice cannot be satisfied unless, after this life, He torments sinners to all eternity. When that is believed, it is no wonder if we find Jewish or Pagan views of calamity. Even so sweet-natured an evangelical as the late Dr. John Ker allows himself to say of the Lisbon earthquake: 'On Christian premises, the history of the world must be cataclysmic. It would be inconsistent to expect anything else. Sin is the ever-present, all-pervading disturbance, and it cannot exist in the spiritual without making itself felt in the material.'¹ For my part, I can find no help in the belief that God Almighty from time to time is seized with a Berserker frenzy; still less can I regard such supposed frenzies as an exhibition of justice.

To orthodoxy, Christ's sufferings are as exceptional and abnormal as the forgiveness which Christ grants. If Christ suffers, being innocent, He is paying vicarious penalties. To conclude from His case that suffering does not argue personal guilt is illegitimate. We can only reach such a conclusion circuitously, by arguing that, since we are forgiven on account of His vicarious punishment, our own sorrows, though caused by sin, must be educational, not vindictive. But the New Testament goes far beyond this. Where orthodox traditionalism calls for 'humiliation,' the Bible calls for joy. And this note is found in the most diverse of the New Testament writers. 'Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.' 'Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ.' [Are we to rejoice in the penalty of sin?] 'We glory in tribulations.' Such joy, such triumph, is only possible if the sense of shame in connection with suffering is set aside. And shame is impossible, if we look steadfastly at Christ, and seeing Him,

¹ *Thoughts for Heart and Life*, p. 68.

the Father's well-beloved, suffering to death, learn that suffering is no proof of God's anger, but an instrument by which God's providence works out its merciful purposes. 'Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same ; that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Sorrow is a spiritual fact, and, like all other spiritual facts, it is susceptible of many distinct meanings. To treat it as, in itself, always and incurably bad is to narrow and impoverish the soul's life.

The work of Christ in the matter of sorrow, as now explained, is the revealing of God's gracious design in providence, or, perhaps we might say, the bearing witness to the course of God's providence. Sorrow is an emphatic way in which God asserts His presence in our lives—makes Himself felt by us ; Christ's interpretation of sorrow is a clearer revelation of God. To some it may seem that such a function is too inconsiderable to attribute to Christ. It may seem that, if that is all, the world can henceforth deal for itself with sorrow, if not with sin, by means of the idea of God's fatherly goodness. Of course there have been Deistic sects who, while professing faith in God's Fatherhood, have denied the living personal Christ. But such sects have only occurred within the Christian world ; and their ignoring or undervaluing the source of their light does not prove anything against the fact that, whatever comfort or strength they had, they really drew from Christ Himself. The Revealer cannot be displaced. And if it be urged—No, but the Revealer may pass away if only the revelation abides, then we reply, that, in the stress of life, men need proof of the assertion that sorrow comes from a gracious God ; we reply, that the cross of Christ often stands between the soul and blank unbelief or madness. If again it be urged, that God's justice is inconsistent with a providence leading all men—both those touched by His grace and those untouched—towards holiness and blessedness, we reply that God's justice

is presupposed both in the grace and in the sin-offering of Him who reveals, and who alone reveals, God's fatherly providence ; we reply that the righteousness of God is safeguarded so long as the grace of Christ is linked to the law of Christ and to God's moral order. In other words, we must not criticise any element or aspect of the Christian life in isolation from the rest. However various its manifestations, that life is not a whole merely, but a unity.

What answers in man to Christ's dealings with us in the matter of sorrow is generally spoken of as resignation. But that is a weak word for so strong and victorious a thing. The Christian temper, as it ought to be, is better described as thankfulness, or as lifelong praise. We resign, it is true, whatever God's will summons us to resign ; but in doing so we give up the lesser good only that He may enrich us with a higher. 'From ashes who would grudge to part when called on angels' bread to feast?' Our life, in one aspect, is a continual ordeal—something done to us. And resignation is the secret of success in this ordeal. We must meet the constant new unfolding of God's will with a glad or at the lowest a trustful acquiescence. Our life thus becomes a continual surrender ; yet it is for that very reason a continuous coming into our kingdom. God is pledged to recompense us. We fall from our dearly loved resting-places into the hands of God Himself. Sometimes our losses come thick and fast ; sometimes they are rarer and more secret. Sometimes faith and joy are comparatively easy ; at other times our former sincere expressions of exultation in God our Saviour threaten to be drowned in tears. But God knows best ; and God's people prove that He never despises and never overtaxes them. It is in losing our life, as He decides, that we find our truer life. The mystery of happiness is solved when at God's bidding we throw away lower joys in order to grasp 'a better and an enduring substance.'

This is what Thomas Carlyle spoke of as 'the worship of sorrow.' To him it seemed to represent the whole of Christianity. We have already had occasion to observe that that is not true ;

there is repentance, there is obedience, in the Christian life ; and, to estimate the Gospel justly, we must look at it all round. Besides which, the ' worship of sorrow ' is a phrase more picturesque than exact. Christians are no ascetics : our Master has left us ' His joy.' It is not sorrow we worship, but a Man of Sorrows. It is not sorrow we aim at, but a blessedness so high and so deep, that common joys and common sorrows become mere cyphers in comparison with it. And you cannot detach the Christian attitude towards sorrow from the supernatural elements of the Christian Gospel. We glory in sorrow, because we have a vision by faith of God as our Father, who is carrying out, alike by joy and by sorrow, alike in us and in the world, the purpose of His love. We know this vision to be reality and not day-dream, because Christ has come in the flesh—the token of the Father's good-will, the fulfiller of the Father's pleasure, the author in our own hearts of purity, righteousness, peace, victory. Indeed, if the word were not sadly overworked, we ought to speak of our response to God our healer, to Christ our comforter, as being simple *faith*. ' This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

With this faith bestowed on us, we feel warranted in looking on human sorrow, in its whole compass, as lighted up with a glory from beyond the heavens. For the sake of suffering humanity, no less than for sinning humanity, we betake ourselves with thankful wonder and with heartfelt worship to the cross of Jesus Christ. One thinks of all that the weak and the oppressed had borne ; one thinks of the unspeakable horror of man's cruelty, of the stupid wickedness and wicked stupidity displayed in the heartless insensibility of crucifixion. And then it seems as if the Prince and Lord of mankind, in His passage through these dominions of His, had turned aside to single out for notice a tortured slave, and, kissing the brow of poor slave humanity, had left it honoured for ever. But Christ has done far more for us than what we might thus fable. He has not merely communed with man, but become man ; He has not merely greeted the crucified with tender

mercy, but Himself has borne the cross. And, as if in token of the fuller compass and larger issues of His redemptive work, the cross, which used to be the symbol of infinite degradation and misery, has become to all mankind the symbol of the infinite glory of love. If Christ were nothing else to us, I think we must love Him for that. 'No wonder,' it has been said, 'that humanity needs a suffering God.' And we reply, that humanity *has* a suffering God. We are bold to say, that God needed to do much if He would convince us that He cared for men. We are bold to say it: for how much God has done! We confess that still, in the mysterious sufferings of every life, and of the whole world around us, God asks a great trust from His children; but our hearts rest in the thought that God has given us measureless proof of His trustworthiness. 'He that spared not His own Son'—what could be added to that?

The cross of Christ is therefore to be regarded as a Theodicy in the matter of human sorrow. But Theodicy raises the larger question of human sin. In regard to that let us say, that, while accepting the argument, that finite freewill involves the *possibility* of sin, we can only explain God's permitting its foreseen *reality* by the fact, that He foresaw the attainment of greater good through the temporary permission and ultimate conquest of evil. Why sin occurred in any one finite race no reason can be given. By its very nature, it is causeless. If we be challenged for speaking of Divine *permission* when all is and must be *fore-ordination*, we would reply that morality seems far the longest measuring-line God has given us for taking soundings in the region of noumenal realities, and that, on moral grounds, we utterly despise those arguments which make God the author of sin, though they allow Him by theological quibbles to contract Himself out of His liability for it. God did certainly permit sin; He certainly did not ordain it. If again the assertion is challenged that God permitted evil because He foresaw how to bring good out of it, we fall back upon the Theodicy given us in Christ's cross; for does not that mean that God 'will have all men to be saved'?—a truth which the

dogmatists perhaps explain away, but to which I must adhere. Certainly we look upon the existence of evil in different fashions. To orthodoxy, sin is finished monstrosity—so utterly hopeless that the mystery of its being, in God's universe, is an absolute paradox,—yes, and a *moral paradox*. To a more Christian way of thinking, as I venture to hold, sin, though itself utterly evil, is involved in the process of God's providential government, and, against its will, yea more, against its nature, yields glory to God and instruction to God's creatures.—moral instruction, ~~a thing for which no substitutes avail~~. Hence we cannot admit that the bare fact of sin's existence is as great a mystery as eternal guilt and concomitant eternal misery. In other words, we frankly confess that our Theodicy is jeopardised, perhaps destroyed, by the idea of eternal punishment made into a dogma. Of course the theology of eternal punishment does not feel this; the reassertion of God's justice against obdurate wickedness seems to it to right the balance, and to restore its due supremacy to the glory of God. I have great respect for that way of thinking, as a Biblical way of thinking. But I conceive that God's education of our race in ideas about the Last Things is one of the slowest and most complex processes which God is carrying on by His Spirit. And therefore I trust, that when God's work is more fully accomplished, Christians generally will emerge from those partial and inadequate views of the Divine nature and workings in which, for a time, men's thoughts had to tarry. That our Theodicy includes the affirmation of universal salvation I do not believe. But it includes the affirmation of God's universal will to save. That will is in its nature efficacious though not irresistible; and the whole of salvation in the case of each redeemed spirit is God's doing. A kingdom of His own, God is resolved to people from our race; that counsel of His stands fast. But His kingdom embraces only willing subjects. Whether ultimately all yield to God, or whether God ultimately 'slay the wicked,'¹ or whether there are other reserve

¹ Certainly not by slow torture, as Mr. Edward White supposes.

arrangements in God's plan which during this life we are incompetent to apprehend, at any rate I conceive that God is producing feelings and affections in the minds of His children which contradict the belief in endless sin and endless misery.

In regard to sorrow, the Theodicy of the Cross speaks to us more directly and more personally. Christ witnesses to as many as hear His voice that their trials are appointed by the same love which sent Him forth into the world, and sustained Him in His work. While this doctrine goes beyond reason, it cannot be alleged that it has anything unreasonable in it. Sorrow admittedly may work the highest good. Sorrow admittedly could not be spared by [a sinful world; redemption craves it no less than justice. Again, our probation requires that punishment do not follow sharp on the heels of each act of sin, in order that we may freely refuse the evil and choose the good. If these things are so, the general outlines of the world's state of misery are necessarily, for moral ends, what they actually prove to be. Only we need adequate proof that this possible moral explanation of the world's trouble is the real explanation; and we get such fully adequate proof at the cross of Jesus Christ, by the revelations which He there completed of God our Father. Each soul may be infinitely sacred to its maker, however He tries it. Nay, the trials may be arranged because of His individual love to it. For God's wisdom can harmonise many different ends under the same dispensation; and, while there is a low-level road through trial which leads to utter impoverishment of the spirit, there is also a high-level path, and it leads to blessedness. Of course the Theodicy of the Cross implies our immortality. The Theodicy includes the resurrection of Christ crucified. And this may make it seem easy in theory—while only in theory easy—to counterpoise present trouble by drawing on the infinite reserve fund of eternal blessedness. But, while the classical interpreters of the Theodicy confess that the 'eternal weight of glory' is 'far more exceeding,' they invite you to test it by what it does now. Christ promises a 'hundredfold now in this

time: Christ Himself knew the joy of self-sacrifice when supported by faith. And how should God but give us more than this earthly life has room for? Unfinished creatures, in an unfinished world, we look to Him for final rest and satisfaction. The ideal has changed—widened—shifted; it has gone through numerous transformations since the Hebrew prophets first gave it literary shape; and, in spite of their impatient faith, the ideal is still only an ideal. But, however it change, however it tarry, those who believe in the Father of Christ will never relax their hold of His promise till the ideal is a fact. Could there be a surer prophecy of its approach than the passionate faith of God's elect in their mysterious Lord? 'In Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded!'

The results of the dealing of Christ with human sorrow are seen in the Church and in consecrated individual lives. As the ideal Church—the invisible Church—'knows the Father,' so does it 'rejoice in the Lord alway.' I claim the Christian Church as the scene of the world's true gladness—the gladness of forgiveness, and of faith, and of obedient service. Joy is a necessary fruit of true religion. The faith which has no gladness in it contradicts the heart's deepest instincts. Those strange modern fanatics who require human nature to submit to a self-denying ordinance, renouncing all expectation of happiness, will lose the little power they have when health returns to the soul of their victims. It is not our greed that clings to a fuller life; what is it? There is some spiritual light within us which will not permit us to starve our souls. Merely to 'grip and worrit you,' if that be all religion does, is too likely to 'leave you much the same.' When such a futile faith is represented as the true Christianity it stands condemned by its very meagreness. But, on the other hand, there is nothing Christian in hugging one's-self with the thought of one's extraordinary and unexampled privileges. It is in the stress of trial and of self-denying effort that Christ's comforts avail; it is out of the soil of suffering that the peaceable fruits of righteousness are fed. Experience proves that the very most

sorely tried of Christian lives may be the most triumphant of all. Or, if we cannot reach up so far as triumph, God will accept us if we are faithful and patient. So much for ourselves. But, for the world's sorrow as a whole, God bids us find comfort by doing the work of Christ in daily duty, and in those opportunities for service which grow out of the faithful performance of daily duty. In so living, we know that we are entering into the very purpose, and thoughts, and life of God Himself, in so far as He is knowable by us. In doing His will we become acquainted with His nature. On these lines He promises to meet and encourage us; not otherwise. And He encourages us by showing us that His own deepest will is to redeem the world. The more Christian we become, the more fully are we convinced of this. Indolent pessimism finds no consoler in Christ; but they who 'do His will' learn 'His doctrine.' The kingdom of God is among us, yet there is much time and toil still in prospect before the kingdom of God can come as one day it shall. Thus our Theodicy—so far as I see—is a progressive and provisional Theodicy, to be crowned hereafter, at what many scriptures call 'the last Judgment.' But how then crowned? 'In Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded!'

VI.

We have already dwelt upon two of the fruits in man of the knowledge of God which Christ imparts. We have studied it as the vehicle of forgiveness and as the source of happiness. If intellect and emotion made up the whole of man's nature, our work would now be at an end. There is an intense moral and spiritual rightness in each moment of faith, in which we know ourselves at one with God, in each moment of rapture, in which we receive drafts of joy from the fountain of living waters. Life can add nothing intrinsically to these experiences; it may by God's mercy reduplicate them; but they are in themselves already the very life of life. Yet man, as a finite being, lives under time and space. Though his intellect may look

down on the real world from lonely heights of abstraction—though his soul may rise to still loftier and remoter pinnacles of distance, not lonely or cold, but flushed with God's presence—still he must come back to the real world, and plod on, moment by moment, through God's gift of time. But morality redeems the time-life from emptiness; duty translates the ideal into time formulæ, and deals it out to the obedient soul as daily bread. The religion of Christ deals with duty, as well as with forgiveness or with joy. It enables us, in the sphere of duty, successively, progressively, really to attain that which is ours ideally in the moment of faith. We are free even in the bondage of 'the trivial round, the common task,' because we are serving God our Father, living by the grace of Christ.

In more theological language, we have now to exhibit works as a fruit of faith. For long ago we laid it down that Christ's revelations of God—which are made to faith—are the channel both of forgiveness, and of spiritual joy, and of moral strength. Christ's revelations are *eo ipso* a work of redemption. So likewise says the Bible. 'Faith,' according to the apostle of free grace, 'worketh by love.' And so, too, the champions of orthodoxy repeat with a thousand eager voices. 'We are justified by faith without works,' they cry, 'but only by a faith which produces works.' It is perfectly true, of course; but it warns us to look closely at our definition of saving faith. I do not see that 'assent to an arrangement' is likely to work by love. If Christians are to do more than assert that faith so works—if we are to exhibit its working as natural—we must give a view of faith as embracing the character of God and assenting to His purposes. Grace must not be an ingeniously contrived exception to the normal development of God's providence. We must emerge from theoretical as well as from practical legalism.

Perhaps it is necessary to defend at the outset our use of the word 'redemption' for this particular benefit of the Christian salvation, inasmuch as the orthodox tradition regards the saved as being redeemed from liability to punishment. But our own

usage has Scripture on its side. 'Ye were redeemed *from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers.*' 'Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us *from all iniquity*, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Indeed, when we once exchange the rigidly legal conception of God for an ethical conception of God as our Father, then it becomes obvious that, whatever else it includes, God's redemptive action will include deliverance from the reign of sin over human lives. A God whose will is for good to men sets them free from sin—from sin first of all. We are said to be redeemed, although we are put under an infinite obligation to Christ; for experience shows that nothing is so regenerating, or so redemptive, or so emancipating as obligation to such a master. The price which Christ paid may be said to have been due to the objective moral order of God's world. The redeemed are saved by Christ because His work is naturally fitted to give them new repentance, new motives, new courage, new success. This is a different doctrine from that which explains redemption as due to God's abstract justice. Abstract justice is extra-moral; it is legal; the moral order of God's world is a moral necessity, presupposed in all God's displays of righteousness and grace. And the moral order of Providence, like the natural order of Providence, is so far to be distinguished from God Himself, the Creator, the Provider, the Father, because in these economies God is working, for wise and loving ends, under certain fixed conditions, with which we can only reach an imperfect acquaintance, but as to which we have ample assurance that God has elected to work under them, just because He is perfect in wisdom and perfect in love. It is in such conditioned worlds that we, utterly conditioned as we are, find ourselves able to commune and co-operate with God. To such fixed moral conditions then did Christ pay the dread price which breaks the power of sin over His redeemed. The moral order is essentially retributive; it is not in itself gracious; but it is not inconsistent with grace, and is a necessary presupposition

of such further manifestations of His will as God may make in grace. In other words, if God is to show mercy, He can only show it to moral beings, who are subject to moral discipline; and the price paid by Christ implies that our redemption is itself a moral thing—morally (not legally) conditioned.

The world which Christ came to redeem must be regarded partly as social, partly as a world of individual souls. And its social condition must be considered separately as found in the Jewish and as found in the Gentile world. But in no respect can the subject of Christ's redemption be described as a mere mass of perdition. Everywhere Christ is seen rescuing elements of good which were struggling, ineffectually enough, against surrounding corruption.

Human society, within which man's moral life is realised, is constituted in the first instance by material necessities. We live in a world controlled by the stern law, that, if any will not work, neither shall he eat. Man's dependence on the soil—especially his need, as an animal, of food, whether vegetable food or vegetable food worked up into animal tissues—binds our race into the processes of nature, and makes us organically a part of the material creation. From this lowest need—the need of food—the desire for material wealth spreads out in a thousand channels, revealing the ideal nature of man, and showing that, while man is indeed a part of this world, he is at the same time its lord. But the desire for wealth is crossed by another, primarily animal, tendency which leads to reproduction, and to a multiplication of the race, which, in accordance with nature's wise general rule, tends to outrun subsistence fast and far. Hence the economic condition of mankind may be roughly described—many qualifying statements being left out—as an equilibrium between wealth getting and reproduction, between man's interests and his passions. But history—*i.e.* Providence—develops moral meanings in the given material and animal data of man's life. Out of the animal propensity to reproduction is developed the moral institution of the family; and out of the material craving for wealth is developed

society, with its mutual helps and offices, and the state, with its ideal sanctity. For a long time, in early ages, these last two, society and the state, are identical. But the inchoate moralising of man's life still leaves its most imperious necessities material. Accordingly, we trace the progress of society by economic changes. The shepherd is more human, because less in danger of starvation, than the hunter; agriculture, steadily practised, is better than the pastoral life, and is the basis of all higher developments; but it is hardly too much to say that civilisation, with all its gains and all its problems, begins in cities.

In the Pagan world, society had been not only the moral sphere but the moral authority. The religion of Paganism, at its best, had been an imaginative idealisation of the state's authority; but Pagan religions, as we have already noted, proved unsuccessful; and, long before the Christian era, public service was recognised without metaphor as the proper object of reverence and school of virtue. The secular ideal taught by the philosophers was of course incomplete, and was sadly inoperative; but it contained noble lessons regarding public duty. On this point, the Pagan civilisations afford examples which Christianity has often been shamefully backward in following. And the Pagan world made beginnings in science, and in arts and letters, as well as in philosophy, it reached attainments to which, whatever fanatics may pretend, an enlightened Christianity can never be indifferent. These legacies of Paganism form no mean part of the moral wealth of the kingdom of God. They constitute, so far as they go, what is essential to the human ideal. But the old civilisations had grave defects even in the regions where they achieved most. They did not merely subordinate the individual to the state, but sacrificed him. This was an evil, and a sure sign of impermanence. Then again, intense as their inner life was, it was maintained by a jealous exclusiveness which time after time burst into the flames of war. War indeed was the leading school of virtue. That it should have been so was lamentably wrong; though human

society is capable of far worse vices than those of the martial spirit. I need not repeat what is so well expounded in *Ecce Homo*—how the Roman Empire, greatest of all the world-empires, had thrown civic virtue out of work; how the circumstances cried imperiously for a cosmopolitan ideal; how, for lack of this, men's moral sentiments revolted against what was best in their age, and wailed helplessly for an impracticable reaction against the whole stream of history and Providence, back to the vanished ages of isolation. What was good in the Pagan world was all in peril before Christ came. Christ put salt into the earth and arrested the corruption. But, besides the perils of that time, there were great evils which had scarcely been felt as evils by Paganism—not only war, but slavery and vice. Even in the case of these, Christianity has effected some improvement. And if, in our own day, the degraded seem more than ever lost because they have fought down their own consciences instead of sinning with the light heart of Paganism,—still, let us remember, that a bad conscience, dreadful evil as it is, is the first step towards a general repentance,—that society cannot be cleansed unless by seeing the foulness of pollution, and so receiving greater light to walk by, or to sin against.

In the Hebrew world, the course of things had been different. The Jews had little to contribute to the development of material civilisation. It has been claimed by George Eliot¹ that they anticipated the modern conception of a nation; but Jewish patriotism is untransferable, and is inimitable, because it is not truly national but tribal,² and because it is religious with a tribal religion. The New Testament transforms the faith which it transplants. It might be truer to say with Kuenen, that the prophetic religion had destroyed for ever the political prosperity of Israel. That is no argument against the prophetic religion. Whatever in this world is worth having, must be paid for. At any rate, the real glory of Israel was not in its material wealth, or in its political prosperity, or in

¹ Prof. Mahaffy, also, in *Greek Life and Thought*.

² So Mr. Goldwin Smith.

its intellectual feats, but in its religion. While the blossoms of spiritual and moral piety, put forth by the Pagan religions, fell to the ground without ever ripening any fruit, within Israel, on the contrary, there had been steady growth in the knowledge of God's mind and will, and in the exercises of faith in Him. But the Old Testament religion was as incapable of permanence as the moral life of the Greek republics. It was only a transcendently glorious tribalism. Its petty form and its deep spiritual contents were in sharp contrast to each other. By the time Christ came, it had done all the good work of which it was capable. Cosmopolitanism was the need of the age. It seems cruel to say that the Jews' zeal for their separate place, as God's chosen people, disinherited them of the future. Yet it is true. Having so little spiritual insight as they possessed, they were actually less favourably situated towards the Gospel than the easy-going Pagan world. And therefore Christ's ideals passed over from the children of the prophets to aliens and to heathen, and Christianity became a Gentile faith.

We cannot, however, contemplate redemption merely as the redemption of states and societies. It is also the redemption of human souls. Now mankind as such are a race destined to progress—incomplete and imperfect at their first start in life. But the freedom, in virtue of which progress is possible, may mislead the soul into disastrous aberrations. The world then, morally viewed, is necessarily a scene of *the making of character*. That gives the world its moral interest and value. As tarnished by sin, the world is the scene of *the making and marring of character*. But it would be false to intimate that in our fallen race nothing goes on except progressive deterioration. Though widespread degeneration takes place, the moral process continues in the race, and partly in individuals. Under the pressure of duty, under the discipline of life, certain elements of moralisation are attained by most characters. But evil lives on too, and has its own hideous laws of growth, its sinuous parasite-like attachment to what is best; and, religion apart, there is no

prospect of a definite victory for goodness. We are divided natures. Two voices speak within us; and both are voices of our own heart, no less truly than both come from without. The voice of our true self is God's voice speaking within us; the voice of our bad self is the utterance of a world of evil. But they are both our own; and it is utterly false to represent man as coldly neutral in making his choice between virtue and sin. These rivals do not simply plead before him; they seize man and hurry him along with them. He is torn in two ways. The bad self can only win the victory by destroying man's true ideal nature; the good self can only win the victory by crucifying the flesh. One self must die within us whatever course we take. But, if we follow after the good, and only so, the end of our discipline is not the mutilation of our nature, but its healing. The whole man is saved; the deep inward wound of our nature is stanchd by Christ. We are reconciled to ourselves when we are reconciled to God and our brethren.

It will be manifest, from what we have already said, that one factor, by which God works for good in the lives of all men, is conscience. This is a familiar truth. Only we must not think of conscience as merely showing what ought to be done—as merely condemning our ill-performance of duty. The idea of such a cold moral light—of a moral influence which gives knowledge but not strength—is bad psychology and bad ethics. We all know the considerations which make people adopt that idea. It is the mystery of sin that men do habitually transgress and offend God against their better knowledge,—that men who are good in some respects are weak and wicked under other temptations. And, while sin exists, the inference, 'I can because I ought,' will not enable any one to commune with God except where God comes near to redeem us in Christ. Nevertheless, if conscience exists as a divine faculty in the soul, by which good and evil are discriminated, it necessarily exists as a divine faculty by which men may do good, and by which God is educating them. If they never could do right, men should have no consciousness of good

and evil. Besides conscience, we must recognise Providence as a force by which God works for good in the individual soul. We are more ready to recognise Providence in the historical preparation for Christ among the nations. And yet we know that God's providence watches over the little things no less than the great. But the question may arise, how far is Providence a *redemptive* power in the discipline of heathen character. In the first instance, Providence is retribution; it is that objective moral order of which we spoke above. As such, Providence is not necessarily gracious or redemptive. But, as we have already noted, this retributive moral order—this disguised yet real and solemn judgment by works—is the very basis of grace. Redemption can only apply to moral beings who are under moral discipline. Hence, perhaps, the right answer to the question whether Providence is a redemptive force outside of the Bible religion, is, that Providence is a necessary element in God's redemption of the world. Apart from the natural penalties of sin, the world's wickedness would have flourished far more luxuriantly than it ever did; apart from the natural rewards of virtue, the virtues of Paganism would have been far fewer and feebler than they really were. Whether, historically, Providence ever was more than an element in redemption—whether human souls ever have been won back to God apart from His special revelation of Himself—is a question which men are not very well qualified to decide. On the surface, human life, apart from the Gospel, is a confused scene of the making and marring of character, where neither process reaches its full accomplishment, but where the evil process, that makes for destruction, has far greater triumphs than righteousness achieves. Under the Gospel, the influences of conscience and of Providence coalesce with the influence of Christ, and are blended indistinguishably with His greater power. God's moral government and man's moral consciousness answer to each other. They are progressively developed on parallel lines, the first culminating in God with us, the second in God in us.

Into this human world, of the making and marring of char-

acter, comes Jesus Christ, with his unmarred nature,—grapples with his vocation, 'the work given Him to do,' the central ethical task of humanity,—carries His purity unstained through the ordeals of His unparalleled experiences,—finishes His work, and, His work and His character both complete,—'made perfect through sufferings,'—returns to the glory of God as a merciful and faithful high priest on behalf of sinful men, well able to succour them that are tempted. This is the one only sinless life,—the one true and complete victory. But it is the life of the Saviour; and the victory avails for all who follow in His footsteps. Thus Christ may be said to introduce, along with the making and marring, the remaking of character. The moral process merges henceforward in the redemptive.

(I.) Of the nature of that life which the redeemed may lead, the Redeemer is Himself the great pattern. Hence Christ may be spoken of as our example. And, in Scripture, He is often so described, fruitfully and helpfully, in relation to particular duties. But let it be observed that Christ is not an example in the ordinary sense of the word. Ordinarily, if I am directed to imitate another, I understand that he performed, with powers equal or similar to my own, that which I am now required to copy. In the case of our Lord, this does not hold good. He was innocent from the very constitution of His Person; He never contracted the stains from which we are all suffering. But, indeed, it is not an example that will help us, but a fresh fund of strength. The Old Testament promises of forgiveness, of a Holy Spirit—these are what we need. And these are what Christ both promises and gives. Hence Christ is our example, only because He is much more than an example,—only because 'believing, we have life through His name.' As His earthly life is the perfect revelation of the Father, so is it also the perfect revelation of true manhood, living in the peace of God, leaning upon God, serving and pleasing God. In what He does for our redemption, Christ is a revealer still. He is a revealer of humanity as elsewhere of Godhead. He is a revealer of righteousness—of what it means, of how it works,

of how blessed a thing it is—as elsewhere He is a revealer of sin. But what Christ reveals to us in this sphere is not eternal and necessary truth of fact, as is that which He reveals to us concerning God's righteousness and love. Sonship, as it was lived out in His human life, may by grace become ours, but is at first strange to us in our fallen estate. He invites us into the fellowship of His righteous life. He communicates what He exemplifies: He redeems us.

We may otherwise express this by saying that Christ reveals to us the essential ideal of human life, which is a realised fact in His own experience, and which, by faith on our part, may through His power become our real experience too. What then is the Christian ideal of conduct?

(1) First, and foremost of all, it is a religious ideal. It means doing the will of God; it means living by the grace of God; it means fellowship with God. In Bible language, Christ and His people spend all their days in worship, as priests to God. In modern language, we are to carry our religion into common life, and glorify God everywhere. Christ reveals righteousness as being God's will—not only the will which commands, but the will which is the inmost nature of Him who wills, and the will which purposes. But it is from the inside that Christ reveals the purpose of God. To a worldly man it would mean little that God was resolved righteousness should triumph on earth. The decree might even sound hard and ungracious, though it is the very grace of God bringing salvation to all men. But Christ reveals its true character, for He makes it known to reconciled hearts. And they, knowing God, understand His purpose from the inside, and are aware that it is their very liberty to serve God, their very life to work His righteous will.

We may reach the same determinations of the nature of the Christian life by starting less from the thought of Christ, more distinctly from the thought of a Christian. What is it that differentiates the behaviour of a faithful Christian soul from that of his neighbours in the world? Chiefly, that he is not

his own. Others live by choice ; he lives by obedience. He regards himself in all things as under law to a Master in heaven. But observe that his obedience is not legal but child-like. If he is worthy the name of a Christian, his deepest wish is to please God ; his truest pleasure is to follow Christ. The law by which he lives is not an alien or oppressive power ; he has a new nature—it is becoming natural for him to do right, unnatural to do wrong ; he is inwardly reconciled to the Lawgiver, whom he loves as a child loves his father. And, although the weakness of his flesh will assuredly cause him many a stumble, many an aberration, many a pang, yet God is writing the law upon his heart, and the spirit who animates his daily life is the Spirit of Christ. Hence, still further, the Christian is one who not only seeks righteousness, or loves righteousness, but does righteousness ; he is a child of obedience. Far off as he is in dignity from his great Pattern—infinitely far off as he is in worthiness from Christ—yet he is learning of Christ. Essentially he too is about his Father's business. Essentially, as Christ was in the world, so also is he.

This primary attribute of the Christian character manifests itself in the first instance, in the sphere of individual piety alone. But all Christian fellowship is a fellowship in the Holy Spirit ; and Christian social life as well as the personal life of Christians must be religious. This is our Lord's chief controversy with modern thought. Many of the elements in the Christian ideal which we have yet to enumerate have passed into the common consciousness of the age, and are proclaimed and promoted by men who deny the faith of Christ. Often Christians have been grievously to blame in leaving portions of their Master's truth to the fostering care of aliens. But, if we are to believe Christ, social reform without the fear of God, and self-denial which denies the name of Christ, are cut flowers—products of life, but having no life in themselves.

(2) The second element we name in Christ's ideal of life is, that it is a social ideal. In this Christ was no more than true to the Old Testament. The very sound of His favourite phrase,

'the kingdom of God,' is a rebuke to our individualism. It is true that, neither in this region nor anywhere else, did Christ meddle with the details of organisation. The Christian Church itself was perhaps founded by a single sentence at His last supper with His disciples: 'This do in remembrance of me.' But what Christ has done is to generate a spirit of social life which is available for use in a thousand different channels—a formative spirit, which, by unwearied service, will create a world of brotherly fellowships. Once—in the life of Christ Himself—brotherhood has been perfectly developed. One Son of Man has found Himself in the hearts of His brethren—lived with their life, joyed with their joy, sorrowed for their sin and pain, shared their burden, brought them freedom. In shedding His life-blood, he made a stupendous consecration of His whole self to our needs. While He was altogether God's in His death, He was altogether ours too; for God has His portion in us, and we find ourselves in God, when God and man meet at the cross of Christ. 'Hereby perceive we love, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' Christ knew and loved God for Himself; we know and love God in Christ. Christ served God for Himself; we serve 'for Jesus' sake.' And the service paid to men is reckoned as done to Christ and to God.

(3) The third point in Christ's ideal I do not feel sure how to describe. It constitutes the outstanding difference between His moral teaching and that of the Old Testament. We may describe it by saying that His ideal is personal; or, that it is spiritual; or, that it is ethically absolute; or, that it requires self-denial as a fundamental law of life. The immaturity of the Old Testament was what kept it from reaching this point for itself—what enabled it down to the close to believe that Israel was the eternally given sphere of piety and of duty—that public legal obligation and inward personal duty were the same thing. Such conceptions must pass away; the old economy must cease, and a new economy begin. Accordingly, in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ takes up the rough-hewn

prophetic ideals of conduct, and, with a few delicate strokes, brings the statue out of the marble once and for all. And, wherever He handles moral truths, there is the same finality about His words. He has a moral sureness of touch to which, much as one admires and reverences the rest of the Bible, one finds no parallel in its other parts, still less in any moral teaching outside of the Bible.

The result, however, of Christ's moral teaching is simple and obvious enough. If morality is to be perfected, it must be perfected in this fashion. It must be made to dwell in the thoughts and intents of the heart. It must be taught to prepare itself for continual sacrifice. Where there is the knowledge of God, along with love for God and men, the undue claims of self disappear. Legal morality, 'moderate' religion, treat our duties as a sort of fixed sum, paid by way of blackmail to the ideal; they are supposed to frank us for enjoying ourselves in our own way afterwards. 'The reason annexed to the Fourth Commandment is, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments.' But the continual inexorable sternness of duty is the obverse of a 'joy in the Holy Ghost.' Morality, such as this, is the chief end of Christ's work. Its promotion is the business of Christianity; any Christianity which puts something else in its place is spurious. When we learn the Christianity of Christ, it becomes self-evident to us that the real life of man is measured by the impersonal law of righteousness, and that we find ourselves by losing ourselves on behalf of others. 'For the joy set before us' we too must follow Christ's example of sacrifice.

Let us not think, however, that Christ's work was easy because it was the necessary moral climax of the Old Testament and of the world. He lived what He taught. His work cost Him the cross. That is why this realm of the kingdom of God has redemptive power. And, redemptively and morally, as well as for the religious ends of revelation and reconciliation, Christ's cross knit together and re-asserted the meaning of His whole life-work.

Now, when sacrifice is required of us, we know that no strange thing is come upon us. God Himself has borne sacrifice. Some have even said that there is an eternal cross in God. I do not say so. As He is most holy, so is God necessarily most blessed for evermore. Yet God has limited Himself, has emptied Himself; sacrifice has mysteriously invaded His blessedness; He has been at cost for our salvation. Christ has lived and died. The power of a new life comes from Him.

In contrast with other pre-Christian moralities, besides that of the Old Testament, we are struck by the many-sidedness of Christ's teaching, by the completeness of His ideal. Admirable thoughts may be found on isolated points in the ethnic teachers; but the revelation of an ordered moral world, where the will of God reigns, and the grace of God works, is peculiar to Christ. Yet we cannot doubt that even the occasional touching of the ideal is acceptable to our Master. The world's sporadic goodness must be precious in the sight of the world's Saviour. All disinterested self-sacrifice is Christian; calculating self-sacrifice is a commercial transaction, as little divine or Christian as anything can be; but, wherever we meet with unselfish love, we recognise the Spirit of Christ. At His cross we are in fellowship, not only with prophets and apostles, but with all loyal patriots and all noble heroes,—with the martyrs of truth and of duty, no less than with the martyrs of faith. Profession is but 'the guinea stamp,' though it mark the character with the most sacred Image of all; love is golden, whether or not it have passed through the church's mint. Those who have counted life and happiness cheap things in comparison with honour are indeed our brethren, and our exemplars in the Christian race. Such deeds sweeten the air for centuries after them. Christ will acknowledge them,—
'Inasmuch as ye did it to these, ye did it to me.'

In regard to inwardness the modern Socialist ideal, whether religious or infidel, comes into sharp collision with the Christian ideal. Socialism would see all duty embodied in institutions. This demand, at best, is an anachronism, which

seeks to call back the pre-ethical ages. Vital as institutions are to moral life, there must be an atmosphere over and above law and the law's demands, or morality will die. In this atmosphere we draw our very life-breath; we commune in it with God. Christ requires of us sacrifices which society never can require or secure, yet which re-act in blessing a thousand-fold upon society. This is one peculiarity of Christian ethic. In the loneliness of the heart God is with us; commanding what no other can command—accepting that of which no other is aware. The sacrifice may be embodied in doing and abstaining, or it may consist in the spirit in which we lead a commonplace life. Either way, so God is with us, all is well. Life without sacrifice is life without an ideal. Life with no secret chambers in it is an impoverished life, or a traitorous falsehood. We must aim at an ideal standard, doing all things 'as to the Lord, and not to men,'—giving alms in secret of our most precious treasures.

This quality of Christian ethic, I venture to think, makes its law very peculiarly a law of liberty. And therefore I think one might hold against Ritschl, that not only the Christian man's faith, but the Christian man's conduct, sets him free from the world,—that, diverse as they are, faith and works—the faith of the heart, and the works of a childlike obedience—co-operate to the same end in establishing our freedom. Mere social decency in behaviour has nothing supernatural or supra-mundane about it; but the cross is the law of every true Christian's conduct; and even the most commonplace Christian fidelity is fed from an inner life, and has its roots in the deep aspirations of the Christian soul.

(4) As a consequence of the three previously noted qualities, we may say that life, according to Christ's ideal of it, is an enthusiasm. The source of this enthusiasm is explained in both—may I not say in both?—of the first two characters of the Christian ideal. It draws its strength both from the love of God and from love to men. The third quality of the ideal measures the strength of the Christian enthusiasm. The sacri-

fices it requires and produces measure the resistance which it overcomes. This resistance may be of the nature exclusively of temptation, as with Jesus Christ, who was in all points tempted like us, yet without sin. Or the resistance may be due to temptation *plus* indwelling sin, as in Christ's redeemed. The very quality of man's sensuous nature makes moral progress a battle, even apart from sin; how much more where sin has reigned to death! Temptation is native to our earthly lot; sacrifice is the only garb under which we could recognise moral goodness. A force overcoming no resistance—we have no acquaintance with such a force. The cheap goodness of untried innocence can never be ours. We have to subordinate the present to the future, pleasure to duty, self to the impersonal law of morality. But in all its details, in all its perplexities, in all its self-denials, the Christian's life is to be a priestly service to God, a continual thanksgiving; and hence, in the grand phrase of St. Paul, the battle of life finds us 'more than conquerors through him that loved us.'

VII.

(II.) In passing now to consider the effects or results of Christ's work as Redeemer, we enter on a somewhat larger subject than we have found in studying the effect or result of Christ's work either as Revealer, or as Reconciler, or as Comforter. We have not yet explicitly discussed how the redemptive life, such as we have described it, becomes ours. Process and result cannot here be separated. The importance of the process may therefore be expected to prolong our study of the result. Moreover, the result of our Lord's redemptive work is a time history; and to us who are in the middle of the historical process—children of His kingdom, heirs by faith of all things, but not yet nearly come to the fulness of our inheritance—to us the result of redemption necessarily has a twofold appearance—what Ritschl, I think, would call a moral and a religious—according as we look at it as a finished thing, ideally complete in Christ, necessary, absolute, depending only on

God's faithfulness to His promise—or, alternatively, as we look at it as a growing thing, really imperfect in Christians, contingent, depending on our faithfulness to our vocation. Under the present head we shall consider the result of redemption as a whole, so far as its whole nature can show itself within the limits of earthly conditions. Under a subsequent head we shall study the results of redemption viewed as an incomplete process.

(1) In the first place, then, Christ as Redeemer manifests His presence in certain objective social institutions, among which the first place must certainly be given to

(a) The Christian Church.—In calling the Christian Church an embodiment of Christ's redemption from sin, I treat it, and mean to treat it, as a branch or province of the Kingdom of God; and this I do, fully accepting Ritschl's view that the Church exists for God's glory in His praise and worship, while the Kingdom of God exists for God's glory in the doing of His will. There is, no doubt, a relative distinction here; but the direct worship of God is one part, though a small part if measured in time, of what God's revealed will requires from us. And Christian worship has an immediate and strong influence on the moralising both of individuals and of society. Our labour is never so effective, or so indispensable, that we need fear to interrupt it for the purpose of worship. And there is no more 'productive consumption' of a Christian's time—if he is an active Christian, not a dreamer—than the time which he withdraws from activity for the purposes of meditation and prayer. Apart from the Church's witness-bearing, the world at large, and even the Church's own members, would speedily forget Christ's ideals. Through repentance and faith we pass into the ranks of the new humanity, and consecrate ourselves to the service of our God and Saviour in His redeemed world. The Church may be regarded as a continuous working in the world of a supernatural life. It is on one side, indeed, a natural historical

succession ; but, on the other hand, every link in the true succession is supernatural,—every link is animated by faith in the unseen. Destroy faith, and the Church of Jesus Christ, with all its moral services and utilitarian advantages, passes away like a picture in the clouds or like a forgotten dream. The sacraments, which are one channel of intercourse between God's grace and man's faith, bear witness to us of all the diverse and mysterious workings with which God's grace encompasses His children.

(b) But Christ's Spirit also avails itself of extant moral institutions, which serve its purpose. In social, as in personal life, a previous moral process merges itself in Christ's redemptive process. The civil state is a province of the Kingdom of God. Government has a divine right, quite apart from its special form. 'The powers that be are ordained of God.' The State's servant is 'a minister of God'—so long, at least, as he does not fail to coerce evil-doers. In the field of politics, the ruling moral ideas of the present day, while they are not found in the letter of Christ's teaching, are quite in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel. The revival of the idea of nationality is perhaps the most noticeable feature in the contemporary politics of the world. And, in domestic administration, the principle is now admitted (at least nominally) that the State must act for the good of its members as a whole. A cosmopolitanism which presupposes patriotism—a patriotism which does not delude itself with a belief in special prerogatives, but which yearns after brotherly co-operation with all Christendom—these are the leading moral clues in present-day politics. Of course the modern international republic of sister states may not be the highest ideal for mankind ; but, at present, it is the highest available ideal ; and, even though it should tax the world in blood and treasure far more heavily than the rarer evil of civil war was wont to do under the world empires, still it gives the nations the possibility of a truer moral development than was consistent with the dead monotony and the stagnant peace of the ancient tyrannies.

To promote national life and international brotherhood is therefore the true Christian politics. *Not* to lacerate the pages of the Apocalypse and the map of modern Europe, in order to piece together in fanciful patterns the fragments of the Roman Empire! The upbreak of the Empire is a significant historical fact, but not a moral clue; and the seer's view (in Old Testament or New Testament) simply did not extend to the outward conditions of modern life. But we have 'a more sure word of prophecy' to help us, when we apply the Spirit of Christ to the real circumstances of the world. And, when we do this, we know that our service of the brethren is service to the Master. The family is another moral institution which Christ adopts into His kingdom. It very remarkably was redeemed by Him—saved from the teeming corruption of a selfish material civilisation—rescued and cleansed, and made a power for good. Unhappily, the false ascetic development of Christian morals was the immediate form in which social impurity was arrested; from that mischance we are still suffering, though nowadays partly through reactionary disparagement of celibacy, which ought to be a useful weapon in case of need 'for the kingdom of heaven's sake.' But almost all through the New Testament itself the moral ideal of marriage is absolutely sane, as well as absolutely pure.¹ Still further, social life itself—daily work, daily business, daily fellowship—is reclaimed by Christ. The Christian ideal has an immense and fruitful field before it here, when we escape the thin-blooded asceticism of the evangelical movement, and, no longer confusing 'the world' as the abstract mass of bad conventionalities with 'the world' as the aggregate human society—believing in the breadth of redemption—set ourselves in earnest to build up a *Christian world*. Under the name *civilis justitia*, the old orthodoxy did not fail to damn with faint praise this part of the service of God. Moral integrity is an entirely unspiritual thing to that narrow system, unless in

¹ It is difficult not to regard the 'monogamy' of the Pastoral Epistles as the forerunner of those ascetic superstitions which nearly destroyed Christianity.

the 'elect' or the 'converted,' in whom, of course, whether moral or the reverse, God 'will not see transgression in Jacob, or perverseness in Israel.' Whereas the truth is, that *civilis justitia* is a means of grace; that no one need attempt to serve God except by doing his duty where God has placed him; that all faithful performance of duty, even by predominantly bad men, promotes the coming of the Kingdom of God, and, *pro tanto*, brings the doers of it nearer salvation. Though God is revealed on one side, in grace, He is revealed on another side, in duty; and both faith and obedience lead a man nearer God. The man may, of course, make his good works a barrier between himself and God by self-righteousness. That is different. He may also make his faith a barrier between himself and God. In spite of this, all goodness, even the smallest beginning, even the faintest survival, is incorporated in the providence of God, and works in its measure towards the fulfilment of God's gracious purpose.

Even its formal character does not prove that respectability is empty of moral meaning. To be out of relation to one's age and environment is no small danger, even when by God's own will we have to secure peace with God rather than harmony with men. All of us run most safely in leading-strings; example, custom, tradition, public opinion, our station and its duties—these are leading-strings by which God supports our wayward feet. It requires severe mental analysis before we can form any estimate of how much we owe to the realised morality of the society in which we dwell. If we were sentenced by Providence to solitary confinement in desert islands, in how many of us would the moral nature be proof against disintegration? The mild Bohemianism of life in a foreign country is too strong for most indolent exiles. It is impossible not to regret that insurrectionism and revolutionary zeal have been canonised—inevitably and without blame—by our history as Protestant Christians. Of those who cast themselves for the *rôle* of martyr or confessor, not one in a hundred is able to play his part; not one in a hundred becomes anything more

praiseworthy than a rolling stone. If it be possible, as much as lieth in one, one must keep to the 'common kindly lot,' and beware of a freedom which is rather exile than independence. Although even here we may serve God and men by humility and conscientiousness, if we are really called to do so.

The life of society may be regarded as a continuous moral life, running through the shifting generations of mankind. In this aspect of it, the kingdom of God is not so obviously supernatural as it is in the Church, where faith is everything. Yet duty is a revelation and working of God no less than grace; and, but for the presence of the ideal, human society would sink to unspeakable depths of materialism.

(c) Besides what it reclaimed, Christianity did not fail to approve itself a creative social force, by generating many new institutions, chiefly benevolent. To find wise ways of helping each other is still part of our Christian calling. And these institutions must not be merely philanthropic. Christians are to seek all the ideal ends of life—truth, goodness, and beauty; and must seek them in social fellowship. As against Puritanism, Matthew Arnold is absolutely right in insisting that the religious ideal shall not be confined to conduct in the narrow sense of the word. To leave even one-fourth of human life common and unclean is a grievous sin. All moral institutions, under the reign of grace, form what we may call an objective Christianity—an objective result—in whole or in the greater part, a result—of Christ's redemption.

(2) Secondly, Redemption results in the creation of a social atmosphere in which good things live and thrive, while evil things wither and die away. In its creation, I have said; for the influence of Jesus Christ is nothing less than creative; although even here it is true that the Gospel reclaims existing elements of good, and builds them up into a stronger, wider, holier system. And here again it is true that large and fruitful fields still remain to occupy, which the Gospel has hardly touched for many centuries. Instead of a Christian public opinion, at once stimulating and checking, encouraging and guiding the

Christian efforts of individuals, we have too often seen a dead conventionalism—the worldliest thing in all the world—parading as a churchly grace or Christian virtue. But let it once be fairly believed that our business and happiness as Christians is to do good, then surely Christian society will not continue so stepmotherly towards the vanguard of Christian progress. Yet let no one reprove Christian public opinion, who has not contrasted it with what he knows of heathen public opinion. If Christ's Gospel is really social—if its scope is really wider than the individual life—it is here it must show itself. The considerable moral consensus that exists in Christian public opinion is impressive and valuable. Respect for what is right, and a dim perception that righteousness is what most concerns men and States, are usual—not of course invariable—in a society which is under Christian influence. Such general convictions are one vehicle of God's grace. They are a partial and imperfect embodiment of God's Holy Spirit—a conditioned form of His working on the minds of men. Christ's revelations, reinforced by His example, perpetuate themselves, in a large degree, by such diffused convictions, and find in these a point of attachment for their more intimate working on the hearts of men. For this diffused form of grace varies much—from an opinion which is barely Christian, up to a communion of souls in spiritual sympathy, such as makes them all greater and more God-like than any one of them is apart. There is no such thing as a deposit of God's grace, or a deposit of God's truth. God's grace dwells among men as an active principle; God's truth enlightens men as a personal conviction of the heart. Grace is hereditary in no other sense than as one holy life kindles the flame of zeal in another; truth is hereditary only as the virtues by which truth is discovered and accredited are hereditary in the Christian Church—only as candour, earnestness, reverence, teachableness, and well-doing make a clean and pure dwelling in the heart for truth to lodge in. Traditions are dead truths, fossil truths. No heart can live by tradition, just as no man can stay his hunger with petrified

bread. We think to ensure ourselves against error by tying ourselves to an authoritative human system ; but the manna we would store up decays ; our little faith has fallen into the ways of unfaith. There is no safety to be found in infallible councils or in infallible books. There is no life to be found except in the living Spirit of God—in the living fellowship of Christ. And, where there is life, there is manifold danger—almost infinite danger ; but there is good hope of final victory. In accepting God's gift of truth, we must accept the means by which truth may be reached. In playing the game of life, if we would 'run so as to obtain,' we must run 'lawfully,' according to the rules which the Lord of life has enacted for it.

(3) Thirdly, Christ's redemption works as a personal influence on the personal lives and characters of individuals. I place this third, not first. For every Christian child is born into—and every convert from infidelity or heathenism enters into—a pre-existing Christian society. Only so does the moral and supernatural life of the Gospel endure. Nevertheless we must not forget that the whole social apparatus of Christianity is wasted if it does not individualise itself in personal conviction, in personal devotion. And within this personal or spiritual world, the personal Christ, by His Spirit, works for our redemption. To the end of time He is with us. In His various offices, He presents Himself as an object to our faith ; in connection with His earthly ministry—accrediting Himself by His earthly ministry—but becoming to us more than a historical influence—becoming a Divine presence. He reveals the Father ; He tells of the putting away of sin ; His cross consoles us ; He sets us our tasks, of doing or of suffering, in the kingdom of God ; He enables us to discharge them. In Christ we find God ; in obeying Christ we obey God ; in leaning upon Christ we lean on the arm of God. It may be, that, by a sudden quickening of the religious affections, we are consciously put in relation to Christ. And such a quickening of the affections has the promise of reacting very favourably

upon conduct. But evangelicalism has grievously exaggerated the significance of what it calls 'conversion.' It is not in one ecstatic moment that Christ seeks or finds us, but in every duty, whether assigned to and discharged by 'converted' or 'unconverted' souls. It is not in one ecstatic moment, but in the habitual obedience of the will all through life that salvation comes to us. 'To live is Christ.' The personal influence by which Christ reaches and sways human souls, is the mutual passion of love. 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' We find that Christ's eye is fixed upon us, individually, in love; that He suffered for us in love; and, yielding to Him, we love Him, and in loving Christ, love God. But the love of God is this, that we keep His commandments. And they are not grievous.

It must be understood that Christ's personal presence in the souls of His redeemed ones is the complex of all His influences. It is not what they can work up in their own hearts by thinking of Christ's words or deeds that brings Him near; still less, any effort of the imagination to 'realise' His presence. As God is everywhere in the world of Providence, so Christ is everywhere in the world of grace; in the Church, and in society, and in the heart. The world of grace includes the world of Providence. Christ is present in circumstances; He is present in conscience. Faith in His presence assents to the fact—keeps hold of the fact—but does not bring about the fact, or account for it, or explain its mechanism. God is mysterious in all His workings. And there is the mysteriousness of Godhead in Christ's presence with His people. He is not one impulse among many—one motive among many. He is our creator, and we His new creation. We willingly yield our nature to Him, to be made what He pleases. Our relation of service to him rests on a habitual absolute surrender of our will to His—a surrender made good in willing obedience. And in the mysterious region, to us inscrutable, where our own affections and volitions take rise—in the place of unconsciousness, out of which our conscious life emerges—

there, in answer to our prayer, Christ communes with us, and forms us anew. 'Thy hands have made me and fashioned me,' we say. 'Give me understanding that I may keep thy commandments.' And again: 'Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight.' And yet again this: 'Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance, and in thy book were all my members written, which day by day were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with thee.' And there, in the beginnings of desire and action, Christ is with us and reigns.

Again, it must be understood that Christ does not exhibit His redemptive power outside of His historical influence, or apart from the motives which lead us to do right, the impulses which quicken us, and the acts of volition in which our moral life takes form. It is possible to catalogue all these as merely human, and then to demand, that if Christ be my Saviour, His Divine power should appear in adding something else to these processes. Hence the orthodox fashion of representing repentance as inefficacious, motive as inoperative, till a special supplement of grace reaches the soul. But the truth is, the processes described are already moral and already Christian. Christ is in them—in the whole complex of His redemptive influences. He does not save me apart from my motives; He saves me by new-creating my motives. He does not save me apart from my will; He works in me 'to will and to do of His good pleasure.' He is not my substitute but the source of my life. Christian motive is completely given in Christ's work; personal Christianity is the application of this motive to the special circumstances of life. But the motive is only so applied with success by those who live in conscious dependence on Christ; and Christ makes offer of Himself to our faith that we may thus trust in Him and live by Him. The normal attitude of the Christian heart is one of absolute

submission to Christ—of cordial acquiescence in the law of sacrifice, as that by which we live—of habitual suppression of the self-seeking and self-willed instincts. Daily effort has to test these principles and make them good.

Still further, it must be understood that, in speaking of what Christ does for us, we do not in any degree mean that Christ does more or different things than God the Father. There is salvation in Christ, only because He brings us to God. The presence of Christ means the presence of God. The continuance of Christ in the world by His Spirit means that the Father whom Christ revealed from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross and empty sepulchre is still, as of old, seeking and saving His lost children, and building them up for Himself into a kingdom of grace. It means that the life of discipleship is still possible, even at the world's end, and in far-off corners of time. It means that the God whom Christ unveiled still unveils Himself to those who draw near in Christ—that the accessible human side of God's nature which Christ disclosed is still accessible—'yesterday, to-day, and for ever'; that the intelligible manlike love which Christ disclosed in the heart of the Father is still to be 'believed and known,' since God is love; that having Christ we have 'both the Father and the Son.' There is, apart from this, a detestable sort of erotic Christianity, which seems to have fallen in love with the Son of God as if He were a mere creature, and which plays with a disgusting fondness upon the name exalted above every name. Such 'Protestant Jesuitry' is offensive to all right feeling, and has nothing to do with the Christian religion.

(4) I am fain to add that, in consequence of Christ's work, the course of Providence becomes a redemptive force in the experience of Christians. The tendency of retribution becomes saving and sanctifying when God the Judge is revealed in Christ as forgiving sin and as fatherly in His goodness. The Christian seeks to be led by the signs of fitness and unfitness in the circumstances of His God-appointed lot. Where God opens the way, He advances; where God shuts the door, He

humbly turns back. Thus his life presents itself as a working together with God. And when we so live, led by God, we find that His grace comes up behind us, and sweeps us on to unexpected triumphs. Though, when superficially regarded, the world is a place of sin and penalty, of failure and misery, more deeply understood the world is a scene of redemption. The Christian God—God as revealed in Christ—God who is in Christ—is with us in life; and we are His servants, to help in carrying out the purpose of His mercy.

This circumstance is the last verification of the truths of the Gospel. From the supernatural voice of conscience, at one end of the series, telling us the absolute and ultimate meaning of human life, as an opportunity for refusing the evil and choosing the good—thence through the historical record of the lives of psalmists, patriarchs, prophets, of good men in all countries—through the record of Jesus Christ Himself in His earthly ministry—through the witness of the Church—through the life of the Christianised society—down to this point, where grace individualises itself as a message from heaven to the personal spirit of the child of God—everywhere Christianity is supernatural; everywhere it touches experience and commends itself to the soul; here last of all and most strongly of all. That ideals exist, which authoritatively appeal to the instincts of the human soul; that these ideals were, historically, in their fulness introduced by Jesus Christ; that He claimed to be the channel through whom God should permanently speak to the world, and act upon it in grace; that, in point of fact, it is through faith in Christ, and in the God of Christ, that men are led to the fulfilment of the human ideal—such are the evidences of Christianity. They afford no complete logical proof. God does not mean that they should. Intellectual proof would fall outside the region of the Spirit and of conscience. The probable evidence God affords us is used by His Spirit in bearing witness with our spirits; and there is reason enough why earnest and candid souls should believe the witness God has borne concerning His Son—should believe that this Son of

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God, who is the historical source of Christian ideas, is also the spiritual and permanent, ever present source of Christian and moral life in human souls. The Christian life must be known from the inside, or it is not known at all. But the natural man, especially in Christian lands, is, in spite of himself, half a Christian to begin with, whatever he may afterwards sink to; he 'tastes the heavenly gift'; he knows from the inside some scraps and fragments of the Christian life. Certainty in conviction is a function of Christian experience. Repentance deepens our sense of the reality of the Gospel; 'doing the will of God' deepens our assurance as to the 'doctrine'; reverent submission, leading as it does to spiritual joy, deepens our convictions; but the lifelong leading, checking, chastening, encouraging of God's providence—a life of prayer and faith—is the surest and fullest source of certainty in the hand of God's Spirit. It is this witness, as we said above, which the Church must help the world to hear.

I readily grant that the subjective experience, of which I am speaking, proves nothing for others than its subjects; and, even for these, it in strictness proves nothing, though it amazingly confirms other proofs. I grant the Christian makes such large assumptions that he cannot test God's Providence by scientific tests. If he succeeds, God has heard his prayer; if he fails—good too, though not so pleasant; better perhaps: God has heard his prayer, but has seen fit to send a different answer. Such are a Christian's beliefs; and scientific verification is impossible under such conditions. Yet, when all is said on the other side, the great fact remains, that there is a law or force, not ourselves, making for righteousness, making for redemption—that we can insert our own petty lives into the context of His eternal purpose, and find a gracious welcome for them; and that the laws and aims of this redemptive process are those which Jesus Christ first announced to the world, and which He told us He had come down from heaven in order to introduce into the world. We could so easily imagine a world where Providence did *not* make for righteous-

ness! or at least did not lead on, and follow up, the feeble efforts of earth-born creatures to work God's will! Our world's gracious Providence is a fact we cannot measure, or weigh, or define. Yet it is none the less a fact—to be reverently acknowledged, thankfully confessed, honestly pondered.

But, considering how this verification of the truth stands related to other evidence, we cannot possibly assent to Lotze's view, that religious truth is credible because of its intrinsic value—because it ought to be true. This would imply that historical revelation is needless and illusory. Assuredly, Christian belief deserves to be true; but yet what a tremendous hypothesis it is! That 'God is love indeed, and love Creation's final law'—that, in spite of sin, in spite of hell, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself'! A tremendous hypothesis, to which common sense gives the lie every day. If we judge by scientific methods of induction, Calvinism would seem liker the truth. To faithless observation, God seems to be picking a few arbitrarily-drawn souls 'out of the rubbish heap,' and tossing millions contemptuously into hell. But Calvinism ought to be false, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ ought to be true. Only it could no more be true to us merely because it ought, than we could lift ourselves off the ground. The unique character, and life, and death of Christ make the Gospel credible. They are something so amazing, so out of the common, so inexplicable on common-sense principles, that they imply a whole world of unsuspected spiritual forces. On the other hand, the Christ of history could be nothing to us but for this verifying process. 'Objective truth' must somehow become subjective, if human subjects are to profit by it. A tremendous hypothesis again, that a Galilean peasant, who died a felon's death in an obscure provincial capital, had 'come forth from God and went to God,' was 'the effulgence of God's glory and the express image of His substance'! And yet, if God be what Christ called Him, our Father, then since there *has* appeared on this beggarly planet One, in whom the moral glories of heaven 'shined so clear,' then it is a credible

saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Therefore we believe in Christ because of God, and in God because of Christ.

(5) Finally, let us note what is the aggregate result of Christ's redemptive workings. It is a new world—a new creation—a new humanity. The old things are passed away; all things are become new. In the new-born world, 'to live' is Christ. His revelations are its light; His ideals are its law; His love is its reward. By the light and by the joy of the vision of Christ, Christians are enabled to do each man his part in translating the vision into reality. The old basis of the world remains. We are still driven by necessity; it is still the law that if any will not work, neither shall he eat. Most of our Christian service must be rendered in the line of our necessary worldly business. For that matter, amateur work is generally of second-rate value. Not in the highest things; the highest work of the world, in every department, is done for love and not for reward, and must be accepted as a gift, without money or price, since otherwise we could not have it at all. But the average man, or average Christian, will do most for God and men, by behaving with a Christian spirit—a spirit of generosity and of ideal faithfulness—in his business relations. To show all good fidelity better commends the Gospel of Christ than a thousand sermons and ten thousand tracts. We are bound to this; we are called to this; and we can do more for the Kingdom of God in this our given vocation than by any fancy work of a feverish philanthropy or religiosity. But yet, of course, Christ's new world is full of the opportunities of extra service. It demands brotherly help wherever a brother is, or may be, in need. And, if we can really help a soul out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberty—if our calling is authentic—if we approach our brother reverently and wisely, commending ourselves to his conscience—there is no work so high as this; no other calling can even compare with this. For indeed the old troubles of the world

are with us still. We serve Christ, and He manifests His fellowship with us, in 'that new world which is the old.'

VIII.

(III.) We have now studied the result of God's work of redemption as a finished whole; but, as has already been said, such study of the ideal cannot exhaust our duty towards this part of the subject. Though we have a vision by faith of the whole, and of the end, yet we know in part only, and we live part by part, bit by bit—sharers of a sinless life, but immature and entangled in a sinful nature. We have therefore now to ask, How does Christ's redemption show if we cut a cross section through human life as an incomplete moral growth? What are the conditional laws of the Divine working by which our life as individuals and as a race may be determined—through sin to death, or through obedience to holiness?

When we take this relative and conditioned view of human life, we have one Divine factor, and one only, left undisturbed in the completeness of its workings—the retributive moral order. When I say this, I do not mean that, for the present, we are altogether abstracting from the thought of Divine grace. We are only changing our point of view towards it—abandoning the more religious, Pauline, Augustinian, Calvinist point of view, under which we regard God's grace as efficacious, for the more moral, practical, Pelagian or Arminian point of view under which we regard grace as efficacious indeed in its own nature, but as incomplete till it is echoed in the consent of a free human will. It is a mark of our finitude—of our double nature, as reasonable souls made in God's image, yet as tied to a time process—that we should need to alternate our points of view in order to reach a fuller image of the truth. Doubtless to God the whole mysterious many-sided reality is transparently plain. I do not attack reason, I merely contrast man's imperfect reason with the perfection of its source and fount. Man 'is not as God'; we know in part.

(1) In the first place, the retribution of righteousness is

certain. It has two sides. Well-doing leads to greater power of well-doing; and it leads to greater and deeper joy. From our present point of view, God's grace is to a large extent identified with the retribution of righteousness. Christians of course must always recognise that their best deeds are rooted in the grace of God; but, when we look upon life with the practical glance of the moralist, we are led to lay our chief emphasis on the fact, that the reward of grace may be earned in the paths of well-doing.

The retribution of righteousness is the general form of all righteous living. 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life eternal.' We have only one perfect example of the operation of this law; naturally, in the One perfect life. Even there, the reward is of grace; though a due reward it is not a legal debt; Christ's relation towards the Father was that of 'abiding in His love.' In Christians the law appears in a very imperfect form. Yet the law works. By 'patient continuance in well-doing' we 'look for glory, honour, and incorruption.' By 'keeping Christ's commandments' we 'abide in His love.' It is true that God 'hath not dealt with us after our sins'; but it is also true, that 'whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in His sight.'

How may this be? Traditional Calvinistic orthodoxy accounts for it by explaining away all the texts I have just quoted. The only source of eternal life, it tells us, is the substitutionary goodness of Christ. Those who patiently continue in well-doing are irresistibly moved by the Holy Ghost to do so; those who are factious, and obey not the truth, are compelled by the constitution of their nature to be disobedient. To Calvinism there is no moral order which is not a legal order; no moral reward which is not a legal award, excluding the operation of grace. And to Calvinism the best deeds of the best men are such altogether filthy rags that it seems a waste of time to speak of them, when one can claim the seam-

less robe of imputed righteousness. Accordingly, Calvinism seeks to convey gracious souls safely through and out of the world, but not to co-operate in the world's moral tasks, or to build up a kingdom of God on the earth. This fashion of interpreting Scripture is no better than handling the Word of God deceitfully. And surely, if God creates, redeems, and sustains the world for the sake of what the Calvinist calls filthy rags—'that we may be holy and without blame before God in love;' for that is the meaning of life, and its whole meaning—then, I say, it is not for us to affect a prudery which God Almighty does not feel. And it is our part to recognise the righteous order of God's grace, which has nothing to do with legal worthiness. 'He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins.' 'He is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love.' God's system of rewards is not meant for vainglory, but for encouragement in the life of obedience. He so rewards and so chastens His children as to help them, not to an impossible legal perfection, or to self-salvation, but to child-like growth, in spite of remaining sin. And therefore 'grace reigns.'

We may illustrate the defective character of Christian men's obedience by pointing out that, inasmuch as sin is always with us in this earthly life, our progress from less wisdom to more, from immaturity to Christian maturity, is also a progress from more sin to less. By itself, the mere fluctuation of less and more in sin would have no value with God—would not bring us near Him—would therefore be no progress at all. But, under the conditions of our present lot, this falling back of the wave of sin is associated with real growth in holiness. And therefore God accepts it, and is pleased with it. Thus it happens that the question, 'Am I further on?' is the best possible test of a Christian's life. Not 'Am I flawless?' though flawless perfection is doubtless what God's love, no less than His holiness, requires—though sinlessness is the very quality of the life in Christ which we share. It will come; if we are really advancing, we are nearing *it*—nearing sinlessness; and we are

nearing it not by way of negation, by cutting off one rotten branch after another, but by way of vitality—by growth in spiritual life—one sign of which is the atrophy and destruction of the sin that had its dwelling within us. And there is no real danger that the imperfect test, ‘Am I further on?’ will encourage men in sin. Careless Christians cannot face that test. It is not by undue self-satisfaction in view of such a test, but by shirking the test, or else by deceiving themselves, that Christians go astray.

The filial obedience we are describing earns its proper proportional wages even as legal obedience might. If, on God’s part, our Christian life is the application of grace, on our own part the Christian life is the appropriation of grace. We cannot indeed appropriate grace bit by bit—good work by good work. If we tried to do so, we should give up grace, and lose everything; we should become legal and fall under the law’s condemnation; for we must certainly fail. God counts each failure and each act of faithfulness; we must confess our failures, but must not count upon our successes: there is a necessary mystery in man’s relation to God, with which reverence will not allow us to intermeddle. ‘Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap’; but assuredly, unless a man sows humility, repentance, self-distrust, faith in God—unless he is in the very opposite attitude from that of trusting in his own works,—he can reap little or nothing satisfactory. Grace is presupposed in all he does. He ‘sows to the Spirit,’ having the Spirit of God freely bestowed upon him. No doubt his reward of growing righteousness is punctually paid to him. Heaven and earth will pass away before that will cease to be the case. But then, he did not know how far he was righteous before; he does not know how much he has grown now. He has no instrument for measuring himself; such judgment is God’s affair; and, just because he calls upon the Judge of all as his Father, he ‘passes the time of his sojourning in fear.’ The reward of joy, again, is under God’s absolute control; to be prepaid, if God will; to be stored up (at interest), if God will;

in a word, it is absolutely subject to God's administration; and no wise Christian will either misread prosperity as being his reward or adversity as denoting God's ill-will. We walk with God in a mystery; our life is a school of faith. We are subjects of God's grace; and the utmost of our own performance is to appropriate that which He gives. But appropriate it we must. Deathbed repentance may be sincere; but it is abnormal. Even it may possibly be followed by peculiar discipline in the unseen world. And normal Christianity includes not only self-abhorrence but self-amendment—both through the grace of God. I cannot help thinking that Christianity is best presented to the young as a law and power of righteous living, to which, by God's grace, the Christian child may be expected to be enabled to dedicate himself when he is passing out of childhood into manhood. The obviously significant question for those who have been well trained in their youth is this—Are you appropriating as your own the spirit in which you have been trained? Is it your will that your life should be Christ's? Other aspects of religion there are—some of them perhaps deeper. If God's Spirit presents these to young hearts, then let us discourse to them at large upon sin in its foulness and sorrow in its misery. But do not let us force these things unduly or prematurely upon any one. The course of life is sure to bring them up, and to impress them upon sincerely pious hearts. Even these things 'God shall reveal.' And the essential point is the attitude of heart and will towards God.

(2) In the second place, we have to speak of the retributions of sin in the present life. In an unmoral world, sin might flourish without a check. In a world of mere law without grace, sin might be left to eat up the character, like wild-fire, according to its abstract moral tendency. God's world is moral; and therefore sin is, not invariably, but normally and in the long-run, checked by punishment. But God's world is gracious, not legal. Therefore sin does not destroy the earth; therefore punishment works for good, more or less; and, even

in the sinner, you find bright isolated virtues ; and these virtues have their working, and earn their appropriate rewards. Hence the paradoxical character of human nature, as it now is. Man's heart is a divided empire. God still gives us opportunity ; He waits for us, in grace. Everything in the present life is provisional.

In the human sinner, with his mixed nature, we therefore have two double retributions,—a retribution of moral loss and moral pain, a retribution of moral growth and moral joy. Unfortunately, the hedonist retributions are almost the only ones that sinful men take account of. The sinner hungers to be paid in joy ; he will serve any master that promises these wages. Or rather, to speak more accurately still, the sinner will probably live at random ; society will rule him in the worse sense, not by its moral tendency, but by its superficial habits and opinions. Most men live from hand to mouth,—deflected now and then from their ordinary routine, perhaps into sin, perhaps into folly—more rarely into some enlarging and ennobling experience, by the desire for some special pleasure. Resolute self-conscious wickedness is not the usual snare even of bad men. A determined villain is almost as rare as a great saint. Weakness of will is a commoner fault than mis-directed strength of will ; want of character than perversion of character. We must beware of describing the natural history of sin in language which will not commend itself to men's consciences as being true to fact. Sinful men know that they are not the diabolical monsters depicted in the technical language of theology. They are conscious that weakness rather than wickedness leads them astray. They naturally distrust teachers who are too clumsy or too indolent to describe facts with accuracy. It is our duty to make all fair admissions to the self-justifying instincts of the human heart, and then to point out, what is terribly true, that, even if a character be as yet only half corrupt, nevertheless weakness, mere weakness, if persisted in, is enough to sap the springs of energy, to deaden the force of the will, and to destroy the soul.

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When the retributions of life begin to tell upon natures of this commonplace type, it is difficult to get them to attend to anything, except the pleasurable or painful consequences of their past behaviour. And accordingly, as, for our probation, pleasure and pain are not strictly dealt out in the proportion of our deserts during the present life, ordinary natures are not always driven to repentance. Hence those are comparatively happy, in the deepest sense, whose sins do encounter punishment; while those whose reckoning with God is delayed are truly to be pitied. Punishment will not in itself heal any soul; but it brings with it a clearer call to repentance. Whoever is punished is so far in touch with God. Or why is it that one finds a distinct ethical satisfaction in tracing calamity to the sufferer's character? Is it not because we thus detect in suffering a penal element? Penalty is not the worst evil that befalls man; what looks like cold impersonal fate,—like accident,—like mere natural disaster,—is worse by far. Punishment is a first manifestation of God's presence. Unless we deny God's grace, we must give thanks for God's judgments.

And here we seem to find an answer to one objection brought against the doctrine that probation may perhaps extend beyond this life. Does law, our critics ask, save men where grace has failed? I reply by asking, What usually saves men in the present life? Is it grace alone (to call it so), or is it grace *plus* punishment? What so often induces men to attend to the offers of God's mercy as some great sorrow? There will be no abandonment of God's normal procedure under the Gospel if He should carry the same opportunity into the unseen world. And, if God is verily desirous that His lost children should repent, it is all but incredible that the Gospel should never be heard save on the earth. Probation, in this world, is no uniform thing; opportunity varies almost infinitely; death is a 'moral accident.' And, when we attend to the hints of Scripture on this point, we find that the modern orthodox prejudice on the subject has singularly little to allege in its support. The phrase 'ye shall die in your sins' is perhaps the

strongest argument for attributing to Scripture the doctrine that death concludes man's opportunity: but the meaning of that phrase is uncertain,¹ and it is addressed to men standing in the very noonday light of religious knowledge. To such men, it may well be that the after-life does not offer what it does to some men. On the other hand, we have the assertion that our Lord in the spirit preached to spirits in prison; we have His own comparison of future penalties, some to 'many stripes,' others to 'few stripes'; we have the assertion that the spiritually insolvent shall not escape 'till he have paid the uttermost farthing'; and, in a singularly solemn passage, we are told of one sin that it shall not be forgiven, 'neither in this age, nor in that which is to come.' Now all such expressions would be out of place² if there were no opportunity given to human souls beyond this life. And these expressions, so dear to the attentive heart, are peculiarly Christ's. No other Bible teacher has invested the vague and necessarily terrible picture of the after-life with such delicate touches. Here, as elsewhere, Christ proves Himself unmatched in His sensitive moral insight, running beyond what men were well capable in that age to receive. Vehemently as Christ warns men against the consequences of sin, yet He does not allow even His impassioned earnestness to blot out the innumerable gradations of guilt and ill desert, or to shut the door of hope upon an only half evangelised, or an unevangelised, world. It was not under the Master's hand that the picture of the Last Things became one of unrelieved terror. It is not by insisting, against our better instincts, on the letter of the apostles' writings, that we shall really enter into the fellowship of Christ. 'The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord.'

Still further; I conceive that the very fact of torment existing in the unseen world constitutes, when rightly viewed, an argument for the possibility, even then, of a soul's attaining to repentance and faith. Why have modern nations abolished

¹ Cf. Ezek. xviii. 18.

² I may refer to the truly admirable statement by Stanton, as above, pp. 339-346.

torture? Partly, of course, because they do not care to procure evidence by it—poisoned evidence, from a poisoned source; partly, because they regard the murderer as handed over to the more severe and more dreadful judgment of God; but chiefly because pain is only legitimate when pain may reform. We flog, if necessary, the garotter; we do not flog the cruellest murderer; and God forbid we ever should! Not that sentimentalism is good; pain for pain, life for life, is a necessary law of human justice. But when the death penalty, the capital sentence, is to be inflicted, lesser concomitant punishments are out of place. The criminal has brought on himself, in the judgment of earth, and so far as earthly opportunity is concerned, irremediable ruin. Pain may be good and right, when it may better the character. Such pain is of course a punishment; it must be deserved pain, or it could never tell for good upon the character. But a lost soul—lost to earthly hope—we exempt from pain. Who has taught us this if not God? And shall man be more just than God his teacher? Do not let it be said that I am introducing irrelevant considerations. Can anything more deeply reveal the convictions of Christian nations than their own action as God's subordinates, bearing the sword on His behalf? Let those who regret the disuse of torture—who think the nations wrong—disown this argument; but let no other dare to do so. And therefore let us agree, that where there is torment, there may be amendment; that, so long as torment lasts, there is hope of saving the soul.

There is another difficulty in regard to the doctrine of probation in the unseen world. Does it not knock to pieces the doctrine of the kingdom of God as a thing living and growing in this world? Is not earthly holiness, earthly repentance, unimportant, if what may prove greater moral opportunities disclose themselves inside the veil? Not, I think, if we hold firmly to the living connection between this life and the next. A second probation, if it occurs, encounters men such as they have made themselves in the world—not having had opportunity to hear Christ's Gospel, or having heard it to grave disadvantage,

so that it is almost as though the Gospel had never reached their ears. God has dealt with men in the earth—by way of education, by way of retribution; and both processes run on into the unseen. Hence, even if, for most souls, the world's moral discipline should be only an initial process, it is none the less intensely solemn. And the moral fellowships of this world do not sink into insignificance, beside the age-long opportunities of the individual soul, if God uses the world's moral fellowships to train mankind at large for the higher opportunities, and higher fellowships, of a life to come. It is still possible, if we deem it necessary, to regard the hearing of Christ's Gospel as being literally the turning-point in the history of each soul. And even if any heathen soul passes into God's presence at death justified by faith—so reverent, and so humble, that God may impute his faith for righteousness—yet, in respect to the human race at large, God's forgiveness is mediated by the work of Christ. And even such a soul, if such there be, must, on hearing the Gospel, assume his destined place in that Kingdom of God which Christ founded; and in doing so our Pagan saint will enjoy for the first time a living and happy instead of a pale and joyless religion. His blessedness, and his fellowship with others, he will owe to the historical Christ, though he will not owe to Him directly the first beginnings of his strength, or the first steps in self-sacrifice. But we may be sure that, with all his fellow-believers, such a soul—if any soul is led to glory by that path—will attribute his salvation wholly to the grace of God in Christ.

We have now completed what need be said immediately under this head. The retribution of evil is not instant destruction. It involves punishment, more or less fully inflicted; and such punishment may prove redemptive, though it may also fail to do so. Even in the characters of the wicked as we know them in this world, there are elements of good; and these have their retributions of good, which struggle, however faintly, against ascendant evil. The dubious battle, it is probable, continues for many souls in the unseen world, after death. On

the whole, even in His dealing with evil, God shows Himself redemptive. But, when Christ's promises are despised, and Christian principles trampled on, then Christ is a judge condemning and punishing. And the punishment runs on into that unseen world, where 'each stands full face with all he wrought below.'¹

(3) Thirdly, we have to ask what are the retributions of those exceptional actions which break the ordinary moral current of a life? Instead of regarding each life as, more or less, in equilibrium, let us regard it as dominated by one or other master tendency—as tending either to final good or to final evil. What are we to say of the lapses of the good, of the relentings of the sinful? If I meet a good man being dragged captive out of the way by the strong seductions of sin, what shall I say to him?

That sin, in point of pleasure, diminishes the happiness of virtue, would be a feeble argument with which to repel the strong allurements of a near temptation. And that righteousness gives some joy to the sinner, in the midst of his losses and pains, seems an almost accidental fact. Nay, it may not be true; righteous actions may but lead the sinner (were he willing to follow) to those initial sacrifices which pave the way for a deeper and a better joy. What is at all times significant, is the influence of conduct upon character. Character is our great concern. Each action is done when it is once committed; but man's character is in the making throughout the whole of (at least) this earthly life. On this point of the growth and decline of character there is not much to add to what is said by the prophet Ezekiel (chap. xviii.) in a similar though somewhat different regard. The broad lines of truth on the subject of personal morality do not alter; once they are seen and reported, they are known for ever. We only miss in the prophet the doctrine of immortality and the distinction between happiness as a reward and growing virtue as a reward. All sin, the prophet teaches, may be retrieved;

¹ Tennyson, *Harold*.

and here the religious side of morals, the doctrine of grace, comes in with almost infinite force to facilitate repentance. On the other hand, all attainments in character, he tells us, may be forfeited. This then is the proper argument to deter the wavering Christian from antinomian lapses, not the threat of a short penance, but 'lest by any means he himself should be rejected.'

But if the Christian does fall into grave sin, yet subsequently repents and amends his life, what then? Does he bear a penalty in perpetuity? How then can he live at peace with God? Or does he exhaust his penalty in time? How then are sore temptations to be fought off? We cannot tell how far penalty may be permanent, how far it may be transitory. We know that the real reserve argument against sinning with a light heart is, lest we should forfeit, not something, but everything. All we are sure of is, that every action makes an indelible mark, to some extent, on the character. The human actor may, or may not, come to be aware of these marks in another life; his fellows may or may not come to be aware of them; God knows them. To God every man is the sum of his past life. The meaning of the marks may change. The traces of disease may sink into a faint scar; perhaps a painless scar, perhaps a scar that throbs and stings from time to time, in memory of a distant evil past. Every saved character will have these marks; tokens of how much has been forgiven him—trophies of God's grace. All the saved will be saints; but the saint saved out of a life of debauchery will have his peculiar marks of the process; and the saint saved out of hypocrisy will have his—and so with all others, including the saint who has been saved a second time out of backsliding. In the end, these marks will be mere scars, or little else; but they are the marks of old wounds, and there was a time when every one of them was a dreadful menace of pain, of misery, of possible death.

And, on the other hand, a lost or perishing soul must have the marks of former goodness in it. But what was formerly

good will no more be so. What formerly expressed a living emotion of sympathy may be now a dead habit. What formerly worked for good may now be poisoned by vanity or selfishness—the naturally wholesome tendency being by this time the slave of triumphant sin. All through the character there is this sad trace of what once was goodness—partial, but real; incomplete, but promising; and the sadness of loss is all the greater, because the lost soul carries in it the record of what it might have become. All is unavailing sadness. Or all would be, unless remedy were possible. But in this life, at any rate, thank God—the only life we have actively to do with for the present—remedy is possible; however difficult, however unlikely, it is possible; and God grants now and then an almost miraculous cure. ‘His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s; he returneth to the days of his youth. He prayeth unto God, and He is favourable unto him, so that he seeth His face with joy, and He restoreth unto man his righteousness.’ Such cases are among the standing evidences of Christianity. Are they perhaps a token of a wider working of grace, yet to be revealed?

So long as the character is unfixd, nothing can be regarded as fixed. Good habit is not good, if it may receive an evil interpretation. Evil habit is not wholly evil, if it may yet be controlled and overruled by indwelling righteousness for the ends of grace. The marks of both will last for ever. How much else will last, we cannot tell. God’s grace is in its nature efficacious. God’s friendship is, on God’s side, eternal. But, while these are normally God’s method with men, we cannot hold that God so insists on them as to neutralise the conditions of moral discipline. And these conditions include the fear of perishing. This will not make the Christian’s life an anxious terror; it will only give him a new bond to connect him with God. It teaches him that his attainments in grace are never his own—that God holds them in trust for him; so that, for the permanence of what he already possesses, no less than for the attainment of what still lies before him, he

depends absolutely and immediately upon God in Christ. But

(4) There must be an end of opportunity for those who persist in ungodliness, or who relapse hopelessly into it. Whether opportunity be lifelong merely, or whether it be age-long, it must have some boundary-limit. Although, in punishing, God waits to be gracious, He is not, He cannot be, one who waits on the pettish will of a spoilt child, constantly asking 'Are you good now?' Existence in the moral world is a more serious matter than that would imply. There is an infinite or qualitative difference between right and wrong—a difference partially disguised by the provisional arrangements of our present life, yet revealed to every earnest conscience. Each act of sin is absolutely evil; each act of obedience, so far as it goes, absolutely good. And though acts of sin, however many, may be forgiven—or righteous acts annulled by contrary acts of sin—yet the tendency of a whole life, the bent of a whole character, repeats the awful reality of the solemn choice between what is utterly good and what is utterly wrong. Hell fire is a crude materialistic picture of the absolute evil of sin.

It is not hard to verify in observation the tendency of character towards final depravity! The difficulty is, to see anything else than moral ruin going on in the world. Unrepentant vanity is itself hell-like; the peculiarly Celtic levity of conscience, which approached insanity in Guiteau, the murderer of Garfield—the levity which amid the ruin of France blames the treason of a single French general—amid the ruin of Ireland, the tyranny of the Saxon, but which never by any chance takes blame to one's-self for one's own destruction—a slough of despond, where there is no foundation to be reached, however deep God's chastisements may pierce. Refusal to repent is a more ruinous thing than many grievous acts of sin followed by true repentance. And not less suggestive of an utterly lost soul is the dreadful phenomenon of ineffectual repentance—a tragedy repeated a million times every week in our own country—the drunkard's repentance on the morning

after his bout, which he drowns anew in his cups as soon as temptation returns—a process which utterly debauches the will, and, by discrediting repentance, the one thing which might prove a remedy, invites despair. Then there is what Christ gives us a glimpse of in his description of the sin which ‘shall not be forgiven’—the malignity which cries out, ‘He casteth out devils by Beelzebub,’ knowing all the time that what it calls evil, what it wills to think evil, is God’s own goodness and grace.

No! It is not hard to see the tendency of sin towards utter destruction. On the contrary, it is difficult to avoid despairing—but for the fact that ‘with God all things are possible,’ although ‘with men it is impossible’ to conquer in this battle. And, since God is gracious, God Himself (mysterious truth) is fighting against sin—striving, like one of us, to win the souls for whom Christ died. These fatal consequences of sin, some of which we have enumerated, enter into the moral conditions of this present life. They are not far away, in a possible world to come. They are the dangers we have now to deal with; and there is no hope for us but in God. Life is always a hard thing. We must do our best to make it easier for others; it is man’s duty to fight against sin—God’s prerogative to permit it. But, whatever special temptations we may abolish or mitigate, it never will be other than hard to enter into the kingdom of God; and to make men think life an easy business will never be other than a cruel injury. But the hard life is the life worth having—the life in which, on our behalf, Christ prevailed. Hardship is not ordained by a malignant power, who hungers for our destruction, but by a benignant power who yearns for our salvation—who offers us much glory and great blessing to be won by a life of fellowship with Him—who has come down into the battle Himself that we may follow where we are led by the captain of our salvation. In spite of appearances, we believe, by faith in Christ, that God is leading all men not towards destruction but towards repentance. We are far from taking the moral phenomena of

this short life as final. We do not despair of Christ; nor do we think His kingdom is to embrace a scratch majority of mankind through being filled up with dead babies, who had no chance of preferring Satan's service, or with adults from the palmy days of the 'millennium,' when the human will is to be subject to some mesmerism of which we know nothing. We are far from the heartless folly which declares every soul to be born into this world ripe for hell. But as little do we think that wrong will ever turn out right, or that it will remedy itself automatically, or that souls will be saved accidentally. We believe that the choice is real—life or death. And whatever be the form of the fate that awaits the obdurately impenitent—dimly but dreadfully shadowed in Scriptural metaphors—we have no reason but to believe that it is possible for character to be irretrievably ruined, and the soul for ever lost.

(5) As we must confess a finality in the determination of character towards evil, so we must cherish the faith that there is a final determination of character towards good in the redeemed. Origen's insistence on the eternal mutability of the finite will has been felt by most Christians to be manifestly wrong. It may be that, for some or for all, there are further trials and ordeals to undergo, after this life is ended. The arguments which are offered us to prove this supposition impossible are singularly weak. However that may be, 'the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God'; and those who continue steadfast in well-doing have the promise of final blessedness.

How human nature will appear after this great transformation we do not pretend to say. The Bible itself is wisely reticent on the subject. 'It is not yet made manifest what we shall be.' Sin is to be at an end; that is made certain. 'We shall be like Him.' Is there to be no more struggle? Is there to be no more effort? Is there to be no more progress? 'A joy that is crystallised for ever' may seem to differ little from 'grief an eternal petrification.' Or, on the other

hand, is endless progress a self-contradictory conception? We cannot answer these questions. Perhaps it is enough to say, that in this earthly life we only know moral things in an earthly vesture—with the marks of pain and struggle upon them—and that heaven's language can only be learned by heaven's inmates. At any rate, the perplexities of the subject are no reason for doubting that God will satisfy the deep human craving for another and a better life, according to the pledge He gave us in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The whole world travails in birth of some 'far off Divine event.' The present chapter in the history of God's moral creation works toward a definite conclusion. What the next will be like—God knows; and God is our Father.

It cannot be a source of surprise that men should wish for some great transformation of human nature and of the conditions of life, within the known stage of human history. To look forward for such a change to heaven seems too great a strain. Hence the attractiveness of millenarian doctrines to those who are able to believe them; but a very little enlightenment explodes such fancies. The millennium is simply one among many imaginative Jewish conceptions of the Messianic age. There can be no doubt that its origin is pre-Christian. So is the ordinary pictorial language of the New Testament for Christ's second coming; that language is borrowed mainly from Old Testament descriptions of Jehovah's advents—*i.e.* from descriptions which are, in the wider sense of the word, Messianic. When both a Millennium and a Second Advent are spoken of (as in the Apocalypse and possibly in 1 Cor. xv.), we have two separate pictures of the final triumph of God's grace put together. To such *Vorstellungen* we cannot assign scientific value. The early Christians expected Christ's return to the world within a few years. How far deceived they were! How much poorer would God's self-manifestation in history have been had their expectations been fulfilled!

We confess that, on the present lines of the world's development, we see no possibility of that universal triumph of God's

grace which our faith must needs *believe*. We cannot explain how God will work out His counsel. The error of men's pre-conceived views of Christ's first advent ought to warn us against dogmatising on this point. Our part is to do faithfully the little portion of service intrusted to each of us, committing the issue of the whole, and of every portion, into the hands of Christ.

IX.

If we try to express the connection between the life of Christ, as set forth in the first part of this essay, and the various phases of the Christian religion set forth in the second part, we find that the sort of necessity, which we are able to verify, changes from point to point. Thus for the revelation of God we may call the work of Christ logically necessary; for comfort in sorrow, psychologically necessary; *i.e.* there will be some severely tried souls who, at least after a certain stage in history, when human nature has reached a certain degree of refinement and of tenderness, can find no comfort unless by the manifestation of God's love, given in the cross of Jesus Christ. The use of the work of Christ for our forgiveness and for our redemption from sin to holiness seems to be somewhat different. In speaking of individuals, we cannot affirm an absolute psychological necessity for acquaintance with the historical Christ before they will repent or strive to do right. It may seem therefore as if, in these solemn aspects of His work, Christ were only the historical cause of spiritual life; and the historical cause, we are ready to think, means the accidental cause. Apologists have dwelt on this historical causation of grace in human lives; but dogmatists have felt it necessary to have recourse to considerations of a wholly different order; they have felt that they were vindicating Christianity when they treated Christ's crucifixion as a price due to the justice of God before sin could be forgiven. On this theory, Christ's work was legally necessary. But what is legally necessary is only hypotheti-

cally necessary (viz. in the event of God's choosing to pardon); God 'might justly have left mankind to perish.'

I think however that we are entitled to speak of the work of Christ as morally necessary for our pardon and sanctification. I confess, indeed, that we cannot prove its necessity for every feeling of repentance in human breasts, or for every act of obedience in human lives. But the Gospel calls us to a complete and fundamental repentance, to a perfect forgiveness, to a slowly regained sinlessness, to a slowly perfected Christian manhood. And these blessings are designed in the Gospel for the 'whole world.' Let the Christian then measure the depth of his need, the height of his destiny, and let him think of himself as a unit in the hierarchies of God's kingdom, then it will become plain to him that he needs, and that his world needs, not God only, but God in Christ—the historical Christ; and Christ, who historically introduced the Christian ideals, and who gave them their supreme exemplification, will be seen to occupy His due place, one avouched by the moral nature which He has raised from death within us, when we hail Him with the honour He claims as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

There is a further advantage in this doctrine of the moral necessity of Christ's work. We can extend it, to express the logical necessity of His revelations and the psychological necessity of His comforts. For both revelation and comfort are morally motivated. Thus, in all its aspects, we may call Christ's work morally necessary. And we can treat the work of Christ as not only hypothetically necessary, but categorically. It is '*the Father*' sends the Son to be the Saviour of the world. In other words, if God is our Father, willing our redemption out of His loving heart, then He *cannot but* send Christ; 'He cannot deny Himself.' Christ's work is, no doubt, relatively necessary in relation to God as well as in relation to men. If God will redeem the world, He is justified in doing so by the use of appropriate means, by the presence within human society of so great a source of spiritual renewal and of

efficacious repentance as is found in Jesus Christ, and in Christ crucified. But also, God necessarily redeems us; not, of course, on legal grounds, because of any claim of ours upon Him, but on moral grounds, because He is what He is. Thus Christ appears in the world, not in pursuance of a fortuitous decree, but as the radiance of God's character, the realisation of God's deepest will. What is in this sense necessary is demonstrated. It has reached the highest verification that can be given to moral or spiritual truth. On this account, while opposing to the utmost the attempt to allegorise Christ, as if He were no necessary fact, but the mere symbol of certain moral principles, I most thoroughly coincide with those who rest the Gospel upon principles, in excluding the idea that a particular incident is the source of our salvation. We are not saved by an event. We are saved by the ~~eternal mercy and~~ love of God our Father. We are saved by Christ, as the translation into history of God's eternal principles of justice and grace. Christ's death—willingly accepted in His unspeakable love—is the fitting form in which the principles embraced in God's purpose could best fulfil themselves. But to assert that there is no grace in God till Christ's death has 'satisfied justice' is to deny both the Father and the Son.

In fact, if a Deistic system could undergo conversion,—if it discovered that the knowledge of God, about which it speaks, needed to be confirmed and interpreted by Christ,—that the forgiveness it speaks of is the forgiveness of Christ,—that judgment is the judgment of Christ,—that moral strength is the grace of Christ,—then, without encumbering itself with the Saul's armour of obsolete doctrines, such Deism, I take it, would grow into the true Christianity of Christ and His apostles. Natural religion as mediated by Christ,—Christianity as issuing in a natural, because morally normal, system,—that is the whole truth.

We may understand this better when we contrast the views of truth, to which we have been led, with several of the Half Christianities. These are systems which, though they testify

to the influence of Christ's spirit upon them, accept only fragments of the whole truth, and suffer accordingly.

(1) The first of these systems, which I shall quote, is the teaching of the late Prof. T. H. Green—a man singularly full of the Christian spirit, singularly defective in point of Christian belief. We may recognise as his province of truth one which the nature of our subject did not lead us to enumerate separately, though we have touched on it in introducing the doctrine of Redemption,—the province of Natural Theology. Mr. Green recognised God's revelation in 'reason; not, however, abstract reason, but reason as taking a body from, and giving life to, the whole system of experience which makes the history of man.'¹ But any revelation in addition to this—any miracle—any personal message from God—any personal manifestation of God—Mr. Green earnestly repudiates. Christ is to him the human soul through whom, historically, the most important step of all steps in advance was taken by the human race; but Christ is nothing more—not sinless—not Divine—not present; the symbol of an eternal rational and moral principle—the principle, that through (metaphorical) death we pass to (moral) life—but no more than a symbol. With this view such men as Carlyle and Arnold substantially agree. Carlyle held Christianity to be = the worship of sorrow; but I am not aware that he troubled himself much to retain, in his grim Deism, any of the softer touches which Jesus Christ added to the sentiments of this hard world. Carlyle's own faith was not the worship of sorrow, but a whimsical attachment to a more or less moral strength, vigour, force. Apparently Carlyle (like the old Deism) believed—not without hesitation—in a personal God. Mr. Green's God was an idea in his own head,² though he strangely describes him as 'understanding and loving.'³ Mr. Arnold's God⁴ was a historical generalisation. On the whole,

¹ *The Witness of God*, p. 22.

² 'God is not something beyond and outside of the consciousness of Him' (*sic*)—*Faith*, p. 97.

³ P. 36.

⁴ 'Is there a God?' asks the reader. 'Oh yes,' replies Mr. Arnold, 'and I can verify him in experience.' 'And what is he then?' cries the reader. 'Be

all of these thinkers represent a less dogmatic and more earnest revival of Deism. Among them, Professor Green gives much the deepest, best-reasoned, and most impressive account of the truths, belonging to the region of Natural Theology, which they all alike maintain.

For their views are true, so far as they go. It is true that God reigns in judgment, as Carlyle taught. It is true that morality is a communion with God, as Arnold taught. It is true that God's *will* is for the victory of right—that God's presence throughout the whole course of Providence is a redemptive presence, as Green taught. This last is the only worthy view of God's dealings with men. It is the only view which matches the character of God revealed in Jesus Christ. As against the exaggerated supranaturalism of traditional orthodoxy, holding that God 'suddenly set up the Christian Church as a miraculous institution owing nothing to the other influences of the world, within which all is light, without it all darkness; within which He works unto salvation, without it not at all, or only to condemn and to destroy'¹—as against this, the neo-Deistic protest is absolutely justified. God is not far from any one of us; His tender mercies are over all His works. For saving these Christian truths, society is largely indebted, historically, to Deistic protesters; and, in so far, the Church and the world, and God in His Providence, had need of this Half-Christianity. But our cordial and earnest assent to its affirmations need not entangle us in its negations, or keep us from going on to further truth. Even Green confesses that something more is needed as a 'complement' to this universal revelation; even Green admits that 'in the nations outside Christendom, as a matter of history, this complement has not been vouchsafed, or only in the most limited and elementary way.'² But, while confessing this, he gives no clue to its

virtuous, and as a rule you will be happy,' is the answer. 'Well, and God?' 'That is God,' says Mr. Arnold; 'there is no deception, and what more do you want?'—F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*.

¹ As above, p. 22.

² *Ibid.* p. 23. Cf. also *Introd. to Hume*, § 1.

meaning. He rejects the clue of Christian faith, that man's sin has separated him from God, and that, in 'Christendom,' God is 'vouchsafing' a remedy for sin, which is slowly by moral means to spread through the whole mass of mankind, partly perhaps in a future life. He refuses to recognise that sin is an abnormal condition requiring exceptional remedies. Indeed, for so good a man, Mr. Green had a singularly dull sense of sin. No awakened conscience could tolerate the doctrine that '*forgiveness is the moral act of putting off the old man.*'¹ Whether we are driven by conscious guilt, or drawn by the soul's hunger for God, we must press on past the benefits of creation and natural Providence, great as these benefits are, to a fuller and deeper acquaintance with the personal God, our Father, when God is found in Christ.

But Mr. Green has a reason for refusing to go further. We must not suppose that his disbelief is captious or wanton, or a freak due to intellectual conceit. It is the serious error of a serious and earnest, as well as singularly powerful, mind. It is wound round the very roots of his system. One of his editors, the late Mr. Toynbee, fairly enough represents that he 'assailed the orthodox foundations of religion' in order 'to save religion.'² Thus he holds strongly that religious faith must not depend on historical 'evidence of uncertain origin and value.'³ We contend that faith may, and does, depend in part on broad historical facts, not on special details,—the facts commending themselves as morally credible. Is there any moral difference between the necessity for certain historical knowledge, in order to faith, and the necessity for a certain philosophical enlightenment of creed? The facts may be befogged by scepticism. Well, so may the principles. The man of science may 'misinterpret' the moral life 'into a natural history';⁴ 'modern "culture"' may 'give great opportunities to the enemy of our spiritual life';⁵ indifference may 'prevent the Divine consciousness in us from duly actualising itself,' and leave us 'in a

¹ *Faith*, p. 62.

² Pref.

³ P. 68.

⁴ P. 79.

⁵ P. 92.

state of moral triviality.¹ If a certain ethical orthodoxy is generally necessary to salvation (as the dogmatists phrase it), why not a certain doctrinal orthodoxy? If intellect must deal with philosophical doubt and difficulties, and if, in this ordeal, moral instincts are its best safeguard, why may not intellect look open-eyed upon historical doubts, and triumph by the help of the same talisman? There is no serious question of the broad facts of Christ's life. The question arises as to their spiritual meaning; and that is attested by conscience. Nor can Christians cut themselves off from the history of their race. They are saved where their brethren are saved—at the cross of Christ. Again, Mr. Green believes that rational self-consciousness implies a uniform working of natural law such as absolutely excludes miracles.² It is strange that a mere theory of knowledge should be held to afford a complete ontology, and a complete theory of conduct. But I cannot fully enter here into the difficult metaphysical issues involved in this controversy. Nor need I repeat what I have already advanced in an earlier section of this paper towards a reply. Only let me add, that man's free will is debarred equally with God's by Mr. Green; a circumstance which terribly hampers his reply to the 'natural history' moralists; for, though his idealist doctrine has some truth to add to popular libertarianism, yet, when idealism is pushed (as by Mr. Green) into a determinism masked by quibbles, then the doctrine becomes equally untrue and impotent. Green's moral genius drags his doctrines in the right direction; but his greatness is almost entirely achieved in spite of his beliefs—to a very small extent indeed because of his beliefs. For the same reason, Mr. Green vacillates helplessly in regard to personal immortality. On all these grounds then—as believing in a living God, in human freedom, in guilt, in redemption, and in a life to come—we part from Mr. Green. His affirmations we also affirm, but we refuse his negations. God is more than a principle formative of man's experience, and has done more for us than this Half-Christianity admits.

¹ P. 93.² P. 83. Cf. the reference given above, p. 34.

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God is present 'in the consciousness of God'—assuredly He is; and in all consciousness of duty God is present; but God is also before and behind and beyond and above man's consciousness of God. He is 'a loving and understanding God,'—yes, and not a dumb God, but one who 'has spoken unto us in His Son,'—

'So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here,
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself."'¹

We believe both the universal revelation and the special revelation with its miracles. We worship not a formula, but a Father. It is not true that 'criticism invalidates'² the old faith. Prejudice invalidates the old faith; but, when scepticism has tried to be constructive, it has never yet managed a tolerably successful explanation of the life of Christ or of the origins of Christianity. It never yet has; it never will.

I should also like to call the reader's attention to the fact, that the view of miracles for which we are pleading is the Bible view—the view of Paul and of John—a view equally far removed from the moral dryness of the eighteenth century evidence-hunters, and from the metaphysical coldness of Mr. Green's Hegelian Pantheism, to which facts are nothing, and ideas everything, which, with its disenchanting touch, annuls the reality, or at least destroys the certainty of God, of freedom, of immortality, and leaves us only a mass of impotent ideas in a world of dead mechanical laws. Mr. Green himself very truly points out³ that in the Johannine writings—he ascribes them to a late writer—the principles are everything, and special sensuous facts are only 'signs,' supplementary though necessary, of God's spiritual purposes and workings. Only it

¹ Browning, *An Epistle*.

² Green, *u.s.* p. 104.

³ P. 30. Mr. Arnold is less happy than usual in his criticism when he treats every word disparaging miracle as authentically Christ's, all praise of it as John's or some other reporter's. The early Christian attitude to miracle was twofold; miracle was to it an element, and only an element, in God's dispensations. We can prove that both sides of this truth were in John's own mind, while we believe he was taught both by Christ.

must be added that to St. John, not the Christ, but His individual works, were the secondary signs. 'Christ in the flesh' was the spiritual fact itself or spiritual principle—for the two are treated as exchangeable—by which St. John lived, for which he was ready to die. Now that, and not Mr. Green's dissolving view of Christian faith—that, and not the Apologists' bundle of intellectual notions, is what we plead for. Is it to go for nothing that, as against both orthodoxy and heresy, we defend the positions of John, and of Paul (*e.g.* on the Resurrection), and of Christ (*e.g.* on the Fatherhood of God and on immortality)? Is it fair to regard as a mere compromise—as mere trimming—what goes back to the well-head of Christian life and truth, and draws from thence?

(2) We ought next to cite those half-Christians who believe in Christ's revelations and in nothing else; but we cannot regard such faith as even a half degree of Christianity. Revelation which does not issue in the spiritual exercises of joy, of penitence, of obedience, is not a religious thing. When men treated revelation as notional, they either got hold of the Christian religion surreptitiously, or thrust it into an appendix to their system (*e.g.* the High Church doctrine of sacraments); or else the world lived for a time without religion.

(3) We pass on therefore to discuss the half-Christianity of the Evangelicals, or the system which concentrates all attention upon Christ's gift of pardon. Lest my language should prove offensive, let me explain that by a half in this connection, I do not mean the mathematically exact fifty per cent., but a fraction, notably less than unity. From this point of view, there can be no hesitation in treating the evangelical theory as a half-Christian rather than a Christian system. Evangelicalism did not, indeed, deny the other elements of the Christian Gospel; but it misunderstood the nature of revelation, and it misrepresented spiritual joy, while the life of obedience was left altogether outside the logic of its system. In that system Christ was not the author of holiness in us, but a substitute for holiness. That a Christian should perform good

works was an important secondary consideration ; the primary matter was, that he should not trust in good works. To teach men their need of pardon—to lead them to seek and find pardon—was the main thing. In their own characteristic language, they sought ‘ to *escape* the wrath and curse of God *due* to us for sin.’

I need not say, that evangelicalism is nobly right in testifying to the world the evil of sin—in testifying to all men that they have no hope except in God’s mercy forgiving them through Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding this, I conceive that a more unchristian ideal was never held up to men than that they should spend their lives in trying to outwit God’s moral law. In God’s universe we may feel sure people will get what they deserve—on the whole, and in accordance with the higher justice, which includes mercy. Christ’s work is not the paralysis, but the fulfilment of the world’s moral order. God is not a martinet, entangled in His own Draconic code. But God is a judge ; and to escape from God’s justice into some unmoral region could be no salvation, but very much the contrary. On the whole, it is wonderful that evangelicalism, in its historical shape, has done so much good work as it has accomplished. It has taught many souls the evil of sin. It has taught many the blessedness of forgiveness. It has revealed to many the love of Christ. It comes to us associated with the dear and reverend memory of not a few pure lives and victorious deaths.

But all this cannot blind us to its hopeless defects, social and spiritual. In its frenzy for a ‘ simple Gospel,’ it simplifies away the moral basis of Christianity. Why should we expect the Gospel to be intrinsically simple ? What is more complex or mysterious than a soul’s relation to God, to Christ, to past sin, to the Spirit of future holiness, to the Church, to the world ? When the Gospel is simplified down to the point of asking men to ‘ accept forgiveness,’ all significance is gone from it. Why ‘ accept’ forgiveness indeed ? In order to escape hell ; sufficient hedonist motive ! yet it fails to work. No ;

let them *seek* forgiveness. God's pardon is not morally intelligible unless it be offered to those who know something of their need and want—'if ye seek me with your whole heart.' When you simplify the Gospel to an unmeaning platitude, you have taken out of it every motive that can appeal to men. It is not an easy salvation men wish! 'They wrong man greatly who say he is to be seduced by ease. Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death, are the *allurements* that act on the heart of man. Kindle the inner genial life of him, you have a flame that burns up all lower considerations.'¹ I do not dwell here on the fact that, once you get men to 'accept' forgiveness, you have to turn round on them and explain that they have 'accepted' the conditions of a life-long service. Ought not that circumstance to give pause to evangelical 'simplifications' of the Gospel? Ought not men to know beforehand the whole of what they are 'accepting'?

If Christianity were a bare amnesty, then evangelicalism might be right; but Christianity is much more. It is, as it was called at a very early stage in its history, 'a way,' which certainly does not mean a 'way of escape,' but a way of human life—a theory, a principle, a power of human life. Instead of preaching as dying men to dying men, let us rather preach as living men to living. For indeed God is not a God of the dead, but of the living. And to leave the Christian life—the Kingdom of God—to grow up by accident, is to dishonour and desert our Master.

One is struck, too, by the singularly far-fetched inducements by which personal religion is pressed on their hearers by modernising Evangelicals. To avoid it is 'unmanly,' 'ungenerous,' etc. etc. Very good second-rate motives—very good auxiliary motives—but entirely unsuited for the first rank! We must do right because it is right. If we do not lay that as the foundation, our superstructure will not be moral, and never will it be animated by the breath of God's Spirit. But this moral beginning is transformed by religion—clothed with life,

¹ Carlyle, *Hero-worship*, ii. p. 65.

warmth, and beauty—when we are told to do right because it is the will of God. And even that principle is brought far nearer us—speaks with a human voice—leads us with human guidance—with ‘bands of a man’—when we are bidden do right because Christ has redeemed us. *Yet all these principles are the same*—barer and fuller statements of the same thing; and, being men, we must translate our thoughts backwards and forwards from one to the other, if we are to think truly and wisely. Duty meets us in developed forms in the mutual offices of a Christian society, quickened and stimulated by Christian faith. But what meets us is always essentially duty.

History declares only too plainly the insufficiency of this type of Christianity. Such obsolete forms of error as sacramentarianism push it aside with the promise of a more many-sided though not a healthier life. Ethical motive is not supplied by it; young Evangelicals go to Carlyle, go to George Eliot, go to Ruskin, for stronger food than the wonted milk-and-water—‘sincere’ milk, let us grant, so far as the milk goes, but sadly blue. I cannot think Jesus Christ meant His Church to be a little walled-in province of the moral world, where they keep up old, graceful customs, and let the gadding world go its own way. I cannot think Jesus Christ meant to found an asylum for priests and women, while the active moral service of mankind should be done by outsiders. We have a new type of Christian life yet to see—a new idea of Christian service yet to form. Christians ought to be at the front of the column, in the heart of the battle.

And therefore, while it would be impiety and irreverence to disown the truths of evangelicalism—while it would be a crime against the brethren as well as against God to speak lightly of sin or lightly of forgiveness—it would be perhaps greater impiety and grosser irreverence to narrow ourselves to that fragment of Christian life which has found room in the Church, or in the revival. The secularities of modern life—the very scepticisms of modern thought—are at least as full of Christ’s influence as much that calls itself faith and piety.

In Christ's name, we lay claim to the whole truth, and break through the barriers of the evangelical tradition. It is individualist; Christ's Gospel is social. It is too often sentimental; Christ's Gospel is moral.

(4) For the half-Christianity of the emotions I may refer to Ritschl's account of the German *Aufklärung*. According to his searching and fundamentally just criticism, that movement erred in regarding as truths of natural religion, truths which were really revealed in the work of Christ; but yet the *Aufklärung* had the merit of making these truths more prominent. We may add that such piety does not feel its true connection with the moral or redemptive process. Doubtless the principle is true, in a high and transcendental sense, that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. But this is a truth for me only if I am yielding myself to God's guidance, and, along with my fellows, am doing my best among the grave evils of this actual world. And Christ is the synthesis of my faith and my obedience—the source of strength in either.

(5) We now reach redemption, or the region of duty. Here it is to be expected that we should find many schools devoting themselves to corners of truth which are recognisably Christian. Without trying to be systematic, let us look at several of these schools.

(a) It will not surprise any thoughtful reader that I should again refer to Matthew Arnold's position. For he is peculiarly the man, among sceptics, who is devoted to the moral teaching of Christ. Never was there a misbeliever or half-believer to whom Jesus Christ meant so much,—never one to whom the Bible was so dear. We might almost say of Arnold, that, while denying the truths of natural religion, he believed in a special revelation of moral and spiritual truth made through Israel and perfected by Jesus Christ. He cut off, under the name of 'Aberglaube,' the supernatural in all its forms; denied, with mockery, the personality of God; denied the possibility that we should be assured of a life after death. But, having thus cut into the quick of Christianity again and

again, he assured us that the mangled remains in his hands were infinitely precious—far more precious than all the world besides—far more precious than the unutilized Gospel of Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Son of God. Though he will not believe in the God of providence and grace, yet Arnold believes in providence, or grace, as an objective influence—traces its working in history—hails it as his God. Thus there is in him a certain religious sense of dependence; nor is this, as with the Pantheists, a merely notional thing; it is a moral thing. Granted he must be a sceptic, Arnold's *tour de force* is honourable to his heart, and honourable to the serious qualities of the English race. His positive teaching is truth—is Christian truth—suggestive, helpful, edifying so far as it goes. He 'thought clear' and 'spoke true,' if he did not always 'feel deep'; for his was a sweet and pure, though not a very profound or spacious, moral nature. We cannot wonder that minds, tired of the big empty words of declamatory apologetics, tired of hearing men beat the air with arguments meant to support foregone dogmatic conclusions, should turn with relief to Arnold's sincerity, paying the price even of scepticism in order to escape from conventionalities and exaggerations.

In some respects, Arnold ought to be our teacher. At his disbelief in the personal God—whom Scriptures call 'the living God'—we can only express our sad amazement. That any one should deny our Father in heaven with a light heart and a flippant tongue, is strange and sorrowful. But Arnold's rebuke of our 'insane licence of affirmation' is too well deserved. It is true and important that the Bible is literature, not science, though that is not the whole truth; and for calling us back to experience—for bidding us verify what we believe—Arnold deserves our warm thanks. But, as a whole, his doctrine is a *tour de force*—a whim. 'Morality' was not 'given' in Israel without 'Aberglaube'; it was given as a message from Jehovah; it was 'new-given' as a message from our Father. The Christian ideals which Arnold loved draw their strength from supernatural beliefs. In the midst of

'Aberglaube,' it may be possible to form a sect of cultured minds who shall aspire after the practical ideals of the Gospels, while denying the theories implied in them. But either a too complete victory of his own opinions, or a more earnest morality awaking the sense of sin, or a deeper spirit of religion awaking the soul's thirst for God, would destroy Arnold's school. He himself, I strongly suspect, harboured the 'Aberglaube' of the hope of immortality. And his finesse will never touch the masses of the people.

(b) The study of sociology makes another contribution to our ideals of conduct; and it too, I think, should be claimed as a half-Christianity. I do not refer to the detail of practical theories. The Gospel has not committed itself to any special social arrangements. It explicitly leaves them to our own management, holding us responsible for the application of Christian principles to all the details of practice. But sociology does rest upon a moral principle, and therefore ultimately on Christian faith, the guardian and champion of the moral consciousness. Sociology presupposes the subordination of the individual to society. Even the theory of *laissez faire* is advocated in the interest not of the individual, but of the social organism. Now the supremacy of the public weal is a moral postulate. It does not appear on the face of things that society is an organism; the moral consciousness within us leads to the discovery. And, if society be not to us a moral organism, embracing morally sacred individuals, our sociology will prove a corrupting and not an antiseptic influence. But, if we keep morally right, then I think it is an eminently Christian service to teach the dependence of each man upon the social whole; and all detailed discoveries in sociology will help us in doing our Christian duty. Society is the sphere of God's working; His Holy Spirit makes us love one another, and live one in the other. This is nothing else than Christianity upon its social side. If only we do not take God's sphere of working for God Himself—deny the Deity because we have found His empty temple!

(c) Another half-Christianity is that which fastens on the Christian law of self-sacrifice for the individual, as if that were coincident with the whole of the Gospel. We have already seen how far that position is true,—viz that a complete spiritual ethic came first from Christ, and that human ethic, when fully developed, necessarily involves self-sacrifice. Besides this, the Christian's attitude of submission towards God's will in providence is a further self-denial. But the effort made by Hegelianism to ground the law of self-sacrifice on the alleged dialectic law of progress is a very dubious matter. Even in logic, the alleged progress by negativity is ill made out. And, in ethics, what does it mean? It means much to us, no doubt—because we have a moral consciousness within us, and because we have Christian teaching without us. Hence we interpret the maxim 'die to live' by what we know of actual moral realities, and of our duty in regard to them. The very exaggeration of the phrase may make it more impressive, and in so far a better phrase. All parable, all metaphor, all poetry in the service of morals, is due to this human expediency of alloying truth with error to make it work better. First-rate men usually speak thus—freely and without danger. They know that their pictures are only types. But alas! the second, third, and fourth-rate men come on the scenes—get caught in their predecessors' tropes—treat pictures *au grand sérieux*—and produce Calvinisms, 'Natural Laws in the Spiritual World,' and Principles of Negativity. What could the maxim 'die to live' do for a learner? It might possibly lead him to a Japanese happy despatch—to Christian self-denial it could not lead him. This law of duty must not be separated from the moral consciousness, which enunciates and interprets it. And the moral consciousness, in its healthy normality, turns out to be the Christian consciousness.

X.

(6) There is yet one other element in the Christian ideal. I do not know that any system of half-Christianity appropriates

it, except that commonest and deadliest of all religious errors, which says, 'Lord, Lord,' but 'does not' the things which Christ commands.

Most of the sceptical half-Christianities may be detected by the want of a due sense of sin. This criticism is offered, very justly, by Mr. Gladstone in his review of *Robert Elsmere*. Certainly, contrition is one of the notes of genuine Christianity. But there is much else besides in genuine Christianity; pity, that the religion of repentance and the religion of duty find it so hard to converse with each other. We must not think this test will always suffice. The thinker I have now to speak of had a healthy sense of the evil of sin and of the blessings of forgiveness. Yet his thinking did not surpass the measure of a half-Christianity.

With many Hegelians, we have to be on our guard against assuming in our simplicity that words mean what they seem to say. The forgiveness of sins, for example, may be some psychological change, or metaphysical discovery,—rarely any thing so moral as T. H. Green's 'putting off the old man.' But with Amiel, deeply influenced as he is by Hegel, it would be unfair to make such an imputation. Amiel is quite exceptionally Protestant and evangelical in his tendencies; and he has the happy French incapacity for being obscure. He did believe in forgiveness, and was thankful for it.

Nor can we say of Amiel, that he reduced religion too much to the consciousness of forgiveness. Though that element is brought out with singular clearness, the religion of submission and the religion of duty are fully recognised by him. The theory seems to be complete. Yet it works imperfectly; religion makes Amiel pure and dignified, but it leaves him depressed, irresolute, constantly full of doubt. What is the missing link?

We might explain his partial failure by saying that he falls into the scholar's error of treating everything as a hypothesis. While he sees the beauty and feels the truth of Christianity, Amiel cannot help considering, from time to time, how the

world would look on the opposite theory. His principles are not left (once tested) to embody themselves in conduct, and approve themselves by their fruit; he is perpetually analysing them, looking at them through the microscope, and putting them together again. He feels it necessary to keep open a line of retreat towards materialism, in case his spiritual beliefs should be turned by the enemy's forces. But these facts only carry further back the question, Why did such admirable theories as Amiel's not work better? How did they fail to produce full conviction?

I take it the answer lies here, that, with all his many-sidedness, Amiel lacked a simple acceptance of the Christian facts. For him, as for Arnold or for Green or for Carlyle, the supernatural was a fairy tale, and the New Testament was composed of iron and clay in about equal parts. This dogmatic disbelief held him prisoner. Since he denied the historical verification God had given eighteen centuries before to spiritual truth—first by the very presence of Christ, then by the accompanying miracles,—therefore Amiel's own theories hung in the air. It makes a world of difference whether morality is doing God's will—working under Christ—or whether, as Amiel sometimes hints, we have to extemporise morality as we go along. The Christian does not rest on ideas merely, however true and however nobly self-commending, but on facts, on spiritual Presences, on inscrutable forces, that have revealed themselves and their operation. All Christianity fails, more or less disastrously, if it leaves out Christ. All Christianity succeeds, more or less satisfyingly, to which God was in Christ, and is in Christ—whose professors desire from the heart that Christ should conform them to His image, and that He should bring them to God, the living holy Father.

The permanent presence of Christ as our mediator with God separates therefore the lives transformed by Christian faith from those lives which are merely modified by Christian influences. The primary doctrine of God in the New Testament is the doctrine that God is our Father,—a doctrine which is

desiccated when it is made a part of that Trinitarian mystery which we are commanded to assert, and forbidden to understand. But the second element of the New Testament doctrine of God is that God is our Father *in Christ*. It is the love of God that saves us, but it saves us by the mission of the Son. We cannot separate Christ from God, or God from Christ. Our worship of both is the same act. Those who lose their grasp of Christ, as we have too plainly seen, are all but certain to lose their hope in the Father also.

The proof of Christ's Godhead may be said to begin with His sinlessness. This fact places Him with God over against the world. We do but express the same argument more fully when we say that the nature and perfection of Christ's work as the world's Saviour shows Him to be God. Yet, for us men, these two considerations rank almost as distinct arguments. It is not merely the character of Christ which shows Him to be Divine; He is not merely a sinless individual, breaking for a moment the current of human history; He is the central figure in human history; He claims to be so, and experience proves that He is so. But, conversely, it is not merely Christ's work of redemption, as attested by the faith of the Church, which proves Him to be Divine. His Divine glory is verified to us by the ever fresh influence of His historical personality. The sinless One who saves us can be no other than God. The Saviour who is sinless must be Divine. Person and work support and interpret each other.

Salvation by a sinless man who was no more than man would be salvation by omnipotent power, in defiance of the moral conditions of life. The purity of such a being would be created in him; and the new act of creation—that, and not a moral process—would contain the secret of redemption. Salvation by a sinless angel would detract from the glory of God. Surely redemption is the greatest thing in God's universe; surely the new creation is only possible as the Creator's own work. It will avail us nothing to join the Arians, and to regard Christ as a demigod (so practically Ewald). God is one; till

we have learned that, we do not know what we mean by God. But besides, Christ is a man; He is at any rate a man,—proved to be so by the most touching proofs; and a demigod who is also a man is an impossible conception. We are left with Christ's humanity; we are shut up to the recognition of His Godhead. That Christ was ever mere man,—that His person was ever a merely human person, however much overlaid afterwards with Divine grace,—is a shocking thought. Such a Person will not bring us to God. God with us, passing through a true human experience, becomes and remains true man = God man.

It is one of the great merits of Ritschl's theology to bring out so clearly as he does the significance for Christian faith of Christ's permanent presence in men's hearts as the Mediator of the human race with God. Along this line of inquiry we may hope to arrive at doctrinal statements which will 'commend themselves to men's consciences in the sight of God.' But Ritschl's own doctrine is of the nature of a compromise. And thus, even he fails to do complete justice to the Christian facts. Even beyond the point where we now stand in our survey of the elements of Christian faith, another half-Christianity may be slipped in. For Ritschl is resolutely ambiguous in his doctrine of Christ's person. And, so far as we can break down his guard, we find that, in spite of the use of the Divine name as applied to Christ, the school of Ritschl really regard Christ as a uniquely endowed man—and no more. In order that the misty halo with which Christ is encircled may be kept unbroken, we are forbidden to inquire into the causation of religious life in the individual. We are told, as by Lotze, that in religion we must inquire into 'values'—into the intrinsic excellence of religious ideas—and omit to study 'causes,' the idea of God and the idea of cause being incommensurable. In order to carry this out, Ritschl identifies Christ's historical influence, as founder of the Christian Church, with His total religious influence. What Christ did was to create a social community. Christianity cannot be separated from its historical antecedents.

Faith in Christ consists in reckoning one's-self a member of His church, and a subject of His kingdom; in consequence of which act of faith, one comes to share 'the common salvation.'

This view of Christ's work is further safeguarded by systematic depreciation of all religious life outside of the pale of historical Christianity. We are forbidden to draw lines of connection, or

to trace continuity, between the Providential process at large and Christian faith as its culmination. Ritschl becomes sharply supranaturalistic in his severance of the historical Christ from His historical antecedents and environment outside of Israel.

Only the personal Christ is of value to Christians. The rest of the world's history is absolutely null and blank for the purposes of Christianity.

Now it is vain for Lotze or Ritschl or any one else to bid the human mind give over inquiring into causes if the inquiry is legitimate and natural. The human mind will take its own way; and even those wilful thinkers who try to banish the doctrine of cause, will have their own doctrine—unconscious, implicit, full of fallacies and contradictions, devoid of light or help. Here, for instance, according to Ritschl, God's causation in grace = the setting up in history of a Christian Church, which propagates itself by natural psychological agencies. Ritschl cannot separate the Christian God from history; and he cannot—not even Ritschl can—weed causation out of history. Accordingly, the only result of his wilfulness is, that he gives us a maimed and defective view of God's causation in grace. But a certain view he does necessarily give us. That any man can give an exhaustive view of any part of the field of God's workings, who will pretend? Here, if in any subject, we are sure to encounter mystery. Nevertheless we shall know enough to assert, that God is at work, personally and directly, in our own spirits, not at a second remove through the agency of the Church, or at a distance of several hundred years. Ritschl does indeed protest that the soul's relation to God or Christ is not through the Church, but in the Church. And that is well said. But so long as Ritschl brands as 'unhistorical mysticism' all recogni-

tion of God's working in grace additional to what is seen in history or in psychological law, for so long he practically makes the Church not the sphere but the substitute for personal piety. And those who prize Ritschl's protest against individualism, just because they value his social doctrine, regret that he should discredit and degrade it by an inadequate philosophy of the religious life.

We cannot shirk the intricate further problems of Christianity. If the thing could be done—if Christian mankind could speculate as far as Ritschl does, and then desist from speculation at his word of command—Ritschl's theology might, I conceive, be a Christian theology. He does not refuse tribute to Christ, but argues that the question of offering this special personal tribute of worship to Christ does not legitimately arise. Such a thinker is a Christian *manqué*. But, since human reason is always pressing for a fuller answer to its lawful questions, the theology of Ritschl gravitates more and more to the left.

In reality, what Christ does permanently for the faith and life of Christian people is no less than the exercise of an absolute personal influence, to which there corresponds on our side an absolute dependence. It is not only for knowledge, or only for pardon, or only for joy that we look to Christ; still less is it peculiarly for law (though His commandments are not grievous), but for life. All that God is to us, Christ is to us. All that God is to us, He is to us in Christ. All natural religion, all previous lower revelation of God, is summed, sealed, transcended, in Jesus Christ, so that, apart from Him, there is no God.

The theology of Ritschl is criticised as keenly by theologians of the left in Germany as it is by German orthodoxy. Such a writer as Professor Lipsius urges against Ritschl the reality of the soul's conscious communion with God, and insists on the unfairness of branding this consciousness as 'unhistorical mysticism.' With this criticism we must agree. But it does not follow that Lipsius and his allies are in better case than

Ritschl. When Ritschl asserts that there is no real communion with God except in the Christian Church, founded as it is on historical revelation, he is trying to safeguard the supreme importance of the Christian facts. We may think they ought to be safeguarded by a fuller doctrine of sin and redemption. And when we have thus safeguarded the historical work of Christ—when we have also accepted the miracles with which ‘God bore witness to Him’—then we can urge the reality of secret and direct communion with God in a way which Ritschl would have felt dangerous. But theologians of the left, when they develop a fuller doctrine of Christian experience, threaten to ~~destroy the doctrine of Christ’s person and work~~. Lipsius has spoken of carrying the Gospel to the higher heathen races,¹ ‘not as a history in the past, but as a power of God which the Christian experiences within himself.’ *Not a history in the past!* ‘This is the record, that God *hath given* to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.’ Lipsius himself tells us that ‘Christianity stands and falls’ with a belief in a revelation of God in the spirit of man, *and* of divine acts in human history. My impression is that the theology of that school, while it has imbibed a good deal of Christianity, is in too ambiguous an attitude towards the Christian facts. Though it connects its ‘inner experiences’ with Christian history, it might at any moment be forced into Deism, or through Deism, modern fashion, into Agnosticism.²

While the Bible teaches us that Christ is God, it does not tell us what modern science has told us, that our world is only one planet in the system of one star. We are often told that the new discovery makes the old faith ridiculous. We reply that we do not believe in Christ’s Godhead upon a priori grounds, but upon its proper evidence; that, all the world being dependent on this one Personality, and this one Personality being unique in human history, and Christ having

¹ See his pamphlet *In welcher Form sollen wir den heidnischen Kulturvölkern das Evangelium bringen?*

² Lipsius’ pamphlet, which I have quoted, is a very pleasing and earnest manifesto, giving a view of his school upon its best side.

told us that He was the Son of God, we believe that He has pleased God to come to us in person for our redemption. At the same time we admit that the Bible says nothing to us about the relation of God to other planets. *If* they are inhabited, and *if* sin has entered them (which our own experience proves to be a possible thing, though we protest that it is not necessary), then our own experience also proves that God may seek to redeem them, and that the character of God will move Him to do so. In Jesus Christ, as He is sufficient for our salvation, so there is power and grace enough to save all worlds. Thus it is possible that God may extend the knowledge of Christ to other planets. But the knowledge of a Saviour belonging to a different world would be a much less gift than that which God has bestowed upon us. And there is no *a priori* impossibility in the thought that God may have done for other worlds something analogous to what He has done for us. Yet, *a posteriori*, God having done and suffered for us, because of our sin, what otherwise God never could have done or suffered, it may be strictly impossible that there should be any parallel to the Incarnation. Scripture does not speak to that question. Our Christian faith is not bound up with any dogmatic assertion, whether affirmative or negative, on matters of this kind, lying as they do outside of the limits of possible experience. Our faith is this, that Christ Jesus is over all, God blessed for ever.

Christ did not begin His ministry by asking any such confession from men. What He led up to, at first, was the confession of Messiahship. That was the bond of the Apostolic churches; and, unless we claim to be greater than Christ, we have no right to revise the terms of church-fellowship. But the question is, How are we to translate the claims of Christ into modern language? Messiahship has become a merely historical category, valuable because of its connection with Christ Jesus. We think of it in the light of Christ; we cannot test Christ by it. Perhaps the best modernising of the idea of Messiah is to describe Christ as the Saviour of the

world. If we recognise Christ's work of salvation as consisting in the manifesting of God, in the putting away of sin, and in renewing the hearts and wills of men, then we are Christians, at least by profession. And nothing more need enter into the rudimentary faith of plain Christian men, except that they worship Christ. But theology cannot avoid asking the question, Who the Person is who saves the world? And theology can ascribe such an office only to a Divine person. Hence it not only may but must teach its Lord's Divinity; and by so doing it justifies Christian worship.

How far we are at liberty to infer doctrines as to what may be called the interior constitution of the Godhead is a different matter. I cannot see that Christ, or the apostles, ever announced to us that they were instructing us on such a subject. God is our Father; Christ is the only way to God; though absent from us now in His earthly humanity, Christ is still with us in Spirit, and, through Christ, God is with us—such is the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity; a doctrine altogether practical, everywhere in contact with the religious life of men. Once again we turn back from human traditions to the purer intuitions of the New Testament. One cannot feel assured that the theological methods of the Greek orthodoxy were either exegetically or spiritually warranted. We must be grateful for its defence of Christ's true Godhead and of His true manhood; and we must make allowance for the great difficulty of safeguarding these rudimentary truths. But we may question whether men are entitled to the exact definitions of Greek theology, or whether these have any meaning. If we are to dogmatise on such remote and unintelligible questions, the so-called Athanasian Creed is a very moderate stretch of dogmatism; yet most unprejudiced readers feel that creed to be a sad misrepresentation of Christ and His Gospel. Indeed, is it not *in limine* startlingly unchristian, to tell people they must believe something which they must not understand? For men to make that statement on their own responsibility, without Biblical warrant, is surely overbold. If the Church can add

to the foundations of faith, what may she not do? No! It is not in such subtly curious questions that Christian faith works. It is in the question what Christ is to me,—if He is my light, my law, my Lord, my Saviour; if He has brought God near me; if He has brought me to God. The Sonship of Christ is indeed intrinsic to His revelations. Apart from it, God's Fatherhood would sink into an accidental and external relationship of adoption; but in Christ, God's only-begotten Son, the Fatherhood of God is revealed as what God essentially is. Yet even this intrinsic relation of Sonship is revealed with a view to our sharing it.

It is a difficult question how far the sceptical Half-Christianities may be used as auxiliaries in the Christian cause. As nominal belief becomes less common, this question will grow more pressing. If 'all things are ours,' the Half-Christianities are ours. For that matter, the Anti-Christianities are ours also. But with these there can be little question of co-operation. With the Half-Christianities, on the other hand, there are large fields of social effort where it is desirable to work in common. To do so will be good for our companions and good for us. There is more real Christianity in self-sacrificing effort for the public weal, than all professions, and tests, and safeguards have ever produced. Let it be understood that Christians look on their allies as imperfectly enlightened men. Then, if Christians can really perform the best public service, it is not too much to hope that a constant tide may set in from the outskirts into the main current—that half-Christians may ripen in great numbers into whole-hearted Christians. We cannot make sure that men who dislike the Churches are invariably enemies of God. Sin has made our neighbours' humanity, which ought to be so interesting a study and so beautiful to us, often so irritating, and that for most trivial reasons—'touch of hand, turn of head'—that we are left uncertain in many cases whether a man is averse to Christ, or whether he is merely averse to the ways and habits of certain Christians. One need not be an enemy of all righteousness

because he dislikes a particular revival preacher! Even while he wrongly lingers in half-Christianity, a man may be Christian at heart. Such men especially might be drawn on to a fuller confession of faith.

But, within the ranks of Church teachers, it does not seem possible that even good men should serve if they are a prey to habitual overmastering doubt. Occasional acquaintance with doubt we could no more debar than occasional acts of sin; and every one who has any knowledge of the human heart will understand that the ordeal of doubt, faithfully undergone, is a softening and deepening process. But the Church is set as a witness to certain facts—to God, to Christ, to His resurrection, to the future life. We have no right to ‘conceal God’s truth’ from His congregation, or to sadden with our own doubts those whom Christ is inviting to the comforts of His Gospel. This seems to be the general rule; it must, of course, be applied with wisdom and discernment.

To mere attendance at Divine Service, it is the Church’s duty and joy to welcome every one, however sceptical, however depraved. And even the sacrament of Christ’s supper is open to those who desire it, so they do not create scandal in manifest contradiction to their implied profession of faith. It is no part of the Church’s duty to make inquisition into the secrets of men’s thoughts. If they think they will be the stronger for the ordinance of fellowship with Christ, and if they profess a sincere allegiance to Him, though mixed with doubt, then, in God’s name, let them come to the Master’s table. It may be He will show Himself to them more clearly. But, if they have taken the responsibility of publicly professing disbelief—if they have made it known that Christ is to them only a memory, and not a presence—then, I conceive, the Church has no right to give them a place among Christians. ‘We partake the same bread’; faith is the basis of our fellowship. The Church dare not alter that basis into one of mere sentimentality. But, while men do not utterly deny the truth, the Church must welcome weak faith—of the intellect, as well as

of the heart—on the charitable assumption that her infirm children are seeking God's light, and are prepared to receive it gladly.

For this, after all, constitutes the difference between one sceptic and another—how he is looking—what is his attitude towards the Church's larger grasp of truth. If a man is willing to be convinced, then there is every reason to trust, that, even during this earthly life, he will ripen into a strong and deep Christian. Unfortunately, the arrogance of intellectual scepticism corrodes most unbelieving minds. The will takes up an attitude of aversion to the claims of Christ. God's Spirit may plead with them, but His pleadings are addressed to deaf ears. They have closed the record against Christ. They have made their 'exodus from Houndsditch'; they have pronounced *ex cathedra* that 'miracles do not happen'; they have settled that 'criticism invalidates' the old faith. The question, even as a possibility, has passed out of their lives. Encompassed by the unsolved mysteries of human life, with the unexplored territory of death not far ahead, and (yet stranger) carrying with them unexplored recesses within their own hearts, they are quite satisfied that their six-foot plummet has fathomed the infinite; they are quite resolved to admit no question of error in their favourite waybills and guide-books. Some of them writhe and groan—some of them smile with sad eyes—some of them compress their lips, and plod resolutely on, shall I say manfully or doggedly? But smiling, or groaning, or silent, every one of them is supercilious towards the Gospel. And superciliousness is poison to the capacity for truth—as fatal to it as vitriol is to the eyesight or the miner's choke-damp to the breath of life.

'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that *thou hast hid these things* from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; yea, Father; for *so it seemed good in thy sight.*'

But, while we thus lay down the law, we are in danger perhaps of forgetting that we are not the custodians of the

THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE VIEWED

...the building, is built constructed of wood,
...and who display a more jealous
...affection—for their own
...temple which these
...somewhat inferior and somewhat block up.
...Christianity, we may be re-
...a Christianity plus—

...the request may be made that we
...from the ardour of the one Foun-
...and antiquated fashion of the gold,
...and apostles built of
...to the more recent improvements
...constructed out of wood, hay, and
...to believe in infallible
...to believe, without equi-
...to believe, in fact,
...though not neces-
...part of the deposit of truth com-

...superstitious aversion from
...and justice that it is the duty of every
...of these or similar articles of
...shown sufficient evidence. To be ignorant
...of religious subjects, impoverishes
...But at the same time we must not
...importance of fundamental truth. We
...of detail as to degrade to their
...upon which all truth rests. Christ is the
...is the republication of all reli-
...the realisation and the living source
...existence. Doctrine which ex-
...of Christ and His salvation, is a very good
...to say that we cannot secure the
...by building on a lower foundation—
...I take it, to supersede the

foundation ; a proceeding which is likely to have grave consequences. And it too much encourages the criticism of an astute and old-established firm of builders who insist on a third foundation, lowest of all, viz. the infallible Church. No ; Christ is revealed in history, and is confirmed by His Spirit, *viz.* by personal moral conviction. Our faith implies a sufficient record, but not an infallible record. The Bible was inspired by Christ's Spirit, and must be read in His Spirit. If it is so read, a thousand errors will not much harm us, provided we reach Christ and trust in Him, and hear His voice, and follow where He leads. If we do not read in His Spirit, the most immaculate and most infallible Bible will be a dead book to us. With this additional danger, that, having our certified codex of correct history and correct opinion—or, that, having our traditionally verified system of doctrines in our hands—we shall be less concerned about those spiritual conditions which other Christians seek to secure as their only means of either knowing what is true or doing what is right.

Therefore I confess that, while willing to learn by fair argument, and while tolerant of all excrescences that do not endanger the foundation, those for whom I speak think ordinary dogmatism not more Christian but less Christian than simple faith. Christ has taught us to expect that excrescences will be attached to His Gospel from which it were better free. Neither if a man believes that Moses wrote Deuteronomy is he the better man, nor if he disbelieve it is he the worse. It does not affect his conduct, it does not transform his view of life, as faith in Christ certainly does. It is simply a question of fact to be settled by evidence. But if, in order to make out that Moses wrote Deuteronomy, a man calls black white, or even grey, while strongly, in his heart of heart, suspecting it to be black—that *does* affect his life, disastrously ! How many such arguments there are, every one knows. Men wishing to be persuaded—sure of being applauded by their immediate circle if they take one side, and sure of being hooted if they take the

other side—put out arguments, in support of what they think Christian truth, so weak and unsubstantial that they would not buy a house or a field, or arrange for a day's pleasure, or take a single practical step in any department of life except religion on the strength of similar arguments. What has real evidence on its side is quite able to commend itself; what has no evidence had better go. And, disentangled from such doubtful and endless disputations, the faith of Christ ought to make its appeal to men more clearly and more strongly. It ought to be possible to accept the Gospel without believing in the marvellous doctrinal harmony of Scripture with Scripture, or in the marvellous scientific harmony of Scripture with observation, or in the marvellous historical harmony of Scripture with research. These superstitions were devised, no doubt, for the support of Christianity. If they ever were useful, the time is gone. We do not permanently keep up a sheathing of wooden platforms and galleries in order to support our great buildings. Take away these scaffoldings, and let men see the building, at last, as the Master planned it!

It is not to doctrinal tradition that we owe any apology. One does, perhaps, owe an apology for disturbance to faithful unspeculative servants of God, who are leading a quiet Christian life. While we talk round and round about the thing, they have the thing itself. If held up alongside the life of obedience, the most correct theological opinions make a poor show. But error must be refuted. Every text-book of church history will explain that heresy led the way, and that truth had to be afterwards stated in order to refute error. The case is still the same. And therefore one trusts God will not allow an earnest effort to express and defend His truth to prove entirely sterile. Such effort ought to enrich and quicken Christian faith. In God's time it will do so. Meanwhile, those whose one practical duty it is to labour this subject must present the fruits of their toil to God, beseeching Him, of His mercy, to forgive for Christ's sake, and to have as speedily as

possible refuted and neutralised, whatever is morally erroneous in their theories; and so to order things that neither neglect, nor malice, nor misconception may hinder what is of God in their theories from effecting that service which, by His blessing, it may be fitted to accomplish.

II.

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINES OF JUDGMENT AND IMMORTALITY.

I.

THE religion of the Old Testament is a growth, developing along the line of the nation's history. Piety under the old covenant was a public thing; the whole people was God's son; and the foreign relations of the people of God furnish a series of turning-points in their religious development. I propose to state here in popular form how these developments are to be conceived in accordance with the leading results of Old Testament criticism. Whether or not we make the critics' views our own, it is important to understand that the religious value of the Old Testament does not disappear in the crucible of criticism, but requires to be newly conceived. It is the more important to bring this out, as writers like Kuenen and Wellhausen do not attend carefully to what we should conceive to be the religious aspects of the history of Israel.

The Book of Genesis, according to the prevailing view among critics, contains for the most part prehistoric matter—myths, and legendary traditions, fragments of which, indeed, are thought to appear in the later books of Scripture. Such a view merely asserts that what held good of every other nation held good in the case of Israel. But what is left us to admire or value in this unhistorical or barely historical material? I answer, the way in which the prophetic spirit has treated its material, the way in which it has *moralised* its material. While the priestly contributors to the historical books of the Old Testament are for the most part coldly correct, the prophetic historians are at once in touch with the popular spirit, and

growingly imbued with moral ideas. With few exceptions, they have made the traditions they handle both profitable and stimulating. Our modern nations, disinherited by an artificial culture of the popular traditions of their own race, find more than all they have lost in the pages of the Book of Genesis. Thus Japheth 'dwells in the tents of Shem'—as in more important ways too.

When the history of Israel fairly emerges into the daylight, we find the people suffering oppression in Egypt, and, in their oppression, rallying at the call of Moses to their ancestral faith. The revelation of God as Jehovah seems to be specially connected with the deliverance from Egypt.¹ The quarrel of the Hebrews is not only patriotic but religious. They are hindered from carrying out the duties of their ritual.² Hence the development of the controversy between Moses and Pharaoh becomes a religious war between Jehovah and the gods of Egypt. But it is of great importance that the religious quarrel has a moral and patriotic root. Egypt and its gods mean oppression; Jehovah is the friend of justice, the helper of the oppressed. And when, at last, Israel escapes to the shores of the Red Sea,—when the wind blows the waters shallow, so that Israel can ford them, and afterwards overwhelms the enemy in his pursuit—then it is plain that, whether or not Jehovah is, in a metaphysical sense, the only God, He is at any rate able and willing to protect His people in their need,—He is at any rate stronger than all the powers of injustice and fraud, whether earthly or spiritual. Although the shoaling of the Red Sea ford may be, in itself, no more than a rare natural phenomenon, still the coincidence of such a phenomenon with such a crisis in history is a supernatural event, whether we like to call it a special providence or a miracle.

Rarely can such experiences come twice in the history of any people. The sense of their unity, the enthusiasm for justice

¹ Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*.

² Wellhausen, Art. ISRAEL, *Ency. Brit.*

and liberty, the enthusiasm for Jehovah their deliverer, must have raised the temper of the people to an intense pitch of exaltation. As Ewald says, St. Paul's phrase, 'baptized into Moses,' is every way justified.¹ What wonder if such a time was signalised by a new revelation of God, and by a new law to regulate the life of men? But do not let us go too fast. Do not let us be too confident that we know how the new revelations will take shape, or how far they will extend. It is natural to make a fight to save at least the Decalogue as Mosaic. And I am by no means sure that either the First Commandment, or the 'reason annexed' to the Second Commandment, implies the metaphysical non-existence of the false gods. Both imply Jehovah's 'jealousy' of all rivals. But if, in later days, we see these commandments not only broken by sinners, but disregarded by reformers—if Monotheism never seems to be rigidly enforced till the age of Hezekiah and Josiah—if Elijah seems not to attack the calf-worship of Samaria, if Amos fails to denounce it, if Hosea is the first to declare it a fruitful source of moral and spiritual corruption—if a brazen serpent is worshipped in the temple at Jerusalem, through the reign of good kings and bad, till Hezekiah breaks it up—must we not assume that a longer development of religious life was required before the Decalogue was formulated?² Again: the Sabbath-day appears to be the surviving member, because the fittest, of a cycle of lunar festivals, in connection with which it is still thought of by the people during the period of the kings (2 Kings iv. 23; Amos viii. 5). Other arguments alleged against the Mosaic origin of the Decalogue are: its purely moral and spiritual cast in contrast with later prevalent superstitions; and the existence of another version of the Decalogue, so called, which is far more ritualist (Ex. xxxiv. 11-26). What then, it will be asked, was the religious gain of the Exodus? Or how can Kuenen confess that Moses is 'the

¹ *History*, in loc.

² It is possible to suppose that the law against images did not form part of the Ten Commandments in their first draft, though it came in as they were amplified. Do we gain much by obviating this one difficulty?

moraliser of the religion of Israel'? The answer is, that the establishment of Jehovah's oracle, to decide questions referred to it, connected religion in the minds of the people with justice and right—all the more impressively, if the priestly tribunal had no police authority to enforce its own decisions, and if their acceptance was enforced only by public opinion, by the course of Providence, and by the dread of God's judgments in the conscience. Jehovah thus became an ideal to the people, and an ideal of righteousness.

Of course the Pentateuch attributes to Moses a whole series—several incompatible series—of complex social arrangements. We can only suppose that these, whether actual customs of later days or legal programmes, were carried back to Moses in the somewhat slavish spirit of lawyers all the world over. When the narrative allows us a glimpse of any cause less than supernatural as influencing Moses' polity, it tells us that he followed advice given by his father-in-law (Ex. xviii.). Translating this from the language of popular tradition into modern phraseology, we infer that he instituted a Kenite organisation among his fugitives. That religion was organised as the description of the tabernacle implies, most scholars have felt to be well-nigh unthinkable. Here, again, some passages in the curious cento of the Pentateuch betray a totally different order of march from that which the priestly theory involves and details (Num. ii. 17, x. 21). The ark, it appears, went first (Num. x. 33). We do not well know what the ark originally signified. It seems actually to have led the battles of Israel (cf. Num. xiv. 44, and 2 Sam. xi. 11). It was as Israel's deliverer that Jehovah began to reveal His righteousness to the people. And, when the ark is lost to the Philistines, its presence in the army does not look like a new thought, but rather perhaps like an obsolescent custom revived in a time of extreme need. The narrator who tells us about it is perhaps puzzled by it; to him it may have been a strange thing; but probably it was not strange in Eli's time. At any rate, the ark was an important symbol of national religious unity—a sort of germ of the One

Sanctuary legislation of later days. Whether or not it contained anything analogous to the two tables of the Decalogue, it was a symbol of the people's relation to Jehovah and to each other. That relation was afterwards interpreted by the Decalogue; or the two Tables may already have been published, even if they were not enclosed in the sacred chest. Therefore, in a sense, it is profoundly true that the Decalogue was in the bosom of the Mosaic ark. But why, if it is not historically true, should the narrative tell us that ark and worship were enshrined in a Levitical tabernacle? This is one point, among many, in which the Grafian hypothesis seems to me to give solidity to a great deal of earlier criticism. Many writers, like Knobel, found the tabernacle as described incredible, but they left their work half done when they gave no account of the motives which led to such a description. But, if the Levitical theory of holiness, with its triple cordon of high-priest, priests, and Levites, is a late development, then the theory of a tabernacle became, in later times, a legal and religious postulate; and therefore it is worked out with the patience of a caste of lawyers and priests. To call the account deceptive would be an abuse of language. Men had no scientific conscience in those old days; not many have even now. If religious theory demanded a fact, what matter though tradition had omitted it? We must simply repair the omission. So they may have felt, in all good faith, if they ever gave the question so much thought even as that implies.¹ In this respect the Wellhausen theory seems to me healing and helpful as compared with such speculations as Ewald's.² Yet, in the stress of debate, some orthodox people betray an inclination to treat Ewald as a guardian of the truth. Against this I earnestly protest. One who is not directly under his fascination finds it hard to understand how Ewald, with all his erudition and all

¹ Canon Cheyne however thinks that the publication of Deuteronomy as a Mosaic book was 'needful illusion.'—*Men of the Bible; Jeremiah.*

² Ewald says as little as possible against the historicity of the description of the Tabernacle. Yet he admits that the narrator has idealised it.—*Hist.* ii. 18. —Eng. tr.

his genius, got pardon for his extravagant subjectivity. He tells us, in regard to the Exodus, that it was almost an accident which then confined 'the true religion' to a single nation. That is, to use a popular expression, Ewald all over. He has a sort of Deistic conception of a religious *minimum* which he calls 'the true religion.' This he hunts all through the Old and New Testaments; this given quantum, not a thing that grows and develops, is the object of his study. He widens it in the Old Testament to embrace doctrines of a pre-existent Messiah, which are very improbable so early as he places them, and valueless if true. He forces into it even in the early books of Scripture doctrines of immortality which certainly have no business there. He contracts 'the true religion' in the New Testament to the same thing—to what he first put into the Old Testament, and then took out of it. We must protest against Christian faith mixing itself up with Ewald's fanciful moral Deism. The confinement of religion to Israel was of great importance. If Renan's construction of the early religion of Israel is correct, progress lay not in the line of the mild universalist belief in 'Elohim,' but in the stern particularisms of Jehovah's service.

To have led Israel out of Egypt and restored them to the free pastoral life of their ancestors, was honour enough for one man. Moses did no more in the way of politics. It was left for his successor to lead the people a further step in advance—to conquer the richer lands of Canaan, and to transform Israel into a race of farmers and dwellers in cities. This brought danger with it to the imperfectly attained national unity; and the customs, religious and other, of the more civilised Canaanites,¹ readily adopted by the ruder conquering nation, had a moral taint, which involved the risk not only of arrested growth, but of moral relapse. The

¹ Modern critical views require us to regard Israel as backward in culture. Kuenen quotes the Nazirites and Rechabites as combining zeal for Jehovah with zeal for the primitive pastoral life, where vineyards were unknown and luxury almost impossible.

idea of the extermination of the Canaanites is probably, like the tabernacle, a late postulate drawn from the idea of holiness, and turned, as usual, into a historical record. There must have been bloodshed enough in the conquest of Canaan, but not wholesale extermination. The vintage feasts of Israel seem to be drawn directly from the customs of their predecessors (Judges xxi. 19 *sq.*). Many ritual customs may have been transferred to the worship of Jehovah; or the worship of Jehovah may have been flanked by local cults. As the critics suppose, Jehovah had not yet begun to regulate questions of ritual. He regarded them as *adiaphora*; the lesson He set to His people was, 'Obey my voice.' After the conquest, there must have been a slow unifying of different race elements. But the Mosaic tribes were in possession of the precious religious and moral traditions, and, in antique fashion, adopted others into their national life.

War and oppression came as a remedy against the threatening evils of this perilous time. Deborah's song shows us that the feeling of the national unity, though imperfect, was by no means lost; and we see in it that religious faith is still the most potent spring of martial prowess. A long, troubled time ensued—on the whole, we cannot doubt, a time of slow growth—till oppression by the Philistines grew utterly unbearable, and was relieved through the agency of Samuel, the king-maker,¹ of Saul and of David. Circumstances in the great neighbouring empires now permitted a short but glorious bloom of national splendour—a time to which all after ages looked back as a lost ideal. We may not unnaturally suspect that they idealised their golden age. It was their habit to treat the past imaginatively. But Nathan's rebuke of David shows us sufficiently that the moral quality of the faith of Jehovah was still secure, and was prepared to assert itself more and more strongly. Be it observed that it is not the uncleanness of David's conduct which Nathan reproves.

¹ The idea that monarchy was an impious demand is probably due to late reflection.

One can hardly speak of chastity to an Oriental polygamist; Nathan tells the king he could have women enough—had he not already Saul's harem? No; it is the injustice, the treachery of David's conduct which God rebukes; and before that rebuke the conscience of the king quails. This is no vulgar Oriental despotism. The king's power is checked by the power of God; and God's commissioned prophets interfere boldly, and generally with safety, in the policy of every monarch, to the great disgust of the rank and file of politicians.

It is probable, however, that religious life was not very deep as yet. David, and still more Solomon, are as closely allied with Tyre as is the house of Ahab in subsequent days. Tyrian workmen, as being more skilled, erect a temple for Jehovah, and adorn its front, at any rate, with heathen emblems (Jachin and Boaz), originally, it is probable, of a very unedifying significance. I suppose few scholars will now make a struggle even for the youth of Solomon. His reign was cruelly oppressive; his religious policy was an affair of ostentation rather than of piety. When the Chronicler idealises him he has to cut out great part of his life, as he had already cut out something from the life of David. The patterns afterwards alleged (in obedience to theory) to be God's immediate gift are here seen to grow up in a thoroughly natural way. Nay, so late as the reign of King Ahaz, the monarch still finds no difficulty in copying a heathen altar which took his fancy at Damascus (2 Kings xvi. 10). The high-priest Urijah, Isaiah's friend (Isa. viii. 2), seems to have made no objection. The forms of worship were still natural, not prescriptively 'holy.'

The separation of the kingdoms, after the death of Solomon, transferred the centre of interest to the northern part of the country. Nor was the revolt at first judged to be irreligious. A prophet had instigated it (1 Kings xi. 29), though others subsequently condemn it (Hosea iii. 5; viii. 4, etc.). Prophecy never considers itself bound by its own past utterances. Hosea denounces Jehu's cruelties as well as Jeroboam's revolt, though Elisha had instigated Jehu. Even the calf-worship,

we have seen, is not immediately condemned by prophecy. The wealth and prosperity of the northern kingdom threw it into the arms of Tyre (cf. Acts xii. 20). Tyrian idolatry—perhaps persecution—is added to the superstition already tolerated. And so, in God's providence, a reaction is provoked; and Elijah carries popular sympathy with him when he stands forward in defence of the old ways. Here again Ahab's injustice to Naboth damages him more than his idolatry. Here again Jehovah appears to avenge civil wrong. After varied fortunes Elijah's work is finished by his disciple Elisha instigating Jehu to conspire against the idolatrous and blood-stained race. We are apt to hold Elisha guiltless of Jehu's violent methods. The Bible nowhere says that he was; if we hold that, we must hold it on our own responsibility (cf. 2 Kings x. 30). But, from the time of Elijah, a steady succession of prophets carry on a new movement, which puts beyond question the moral and spiritual elevation of the religion of Jehovah. The wave of Tyrian influence has been rolled back; now a more terrible foreign influence threatens the ungodly kingdom; the world-empire of Assyria draws menacingly near. This fact lies in the background of the utterances of the first of those prophets who gave their oracles permanence by reducing them to writing.

Amos, whom recent criticism regards as the first of the literary prophets, was a man of Judah, though he prophesied in the northern kingdom. The fact is of interest, as showing the religious solidarity of the two states, and the superior importance of the larger. Possibly we may also infer from Amos' nationality that Judah was in a better religious condition. Yet it is not Amos, but Hosea the northerner (iv. 15, and, if our text is correct, xi. 12), who speaks favourably of the condition of Judah. Both prophets set themselves against the impotent cunning of the popular foreign policy of the day. Both point out that, in a region nearer at hand, the national safety may and must be secured. The popular religion, trusting in ritual, thought that all was well in the relations of the

State with Jehovah. But the prophetic religion brushes aside ritual as a secondary thing, and a thing indifferent to God. Amos calls for a reform of civil justice, thus maintaining and deepening the connection between the fear of Jehovah and the law of morality. Hosea, a priest by birth, a man of more inward feeling, and trained for the prophetic office by strange and bitter personal experiences, attacks the calf-worship, not as a breach of positive law, but as an infringement of the spirit of true devotion in which Jehovah must be served, and as a fruitful source of moral corruption. Hosea, therefore, calls for a more penetrating religious reformation. It is also Hosea who first explicitly lays down the canon that Jeroboam's revolt was itself an irreligious act. This shows how the new literary prophecy was breaking with the hasty and insufficient methods of reform favoured by its predecessors, from Ahijah to Elisha. The soteriology of the prophets is still extremely simple. Amos says, 'Let righteousness flow down your streets;' Hosea says, 'Return to David, but, above all, return to God.'

After Amos and Hosea many writers place Zech. ix.-xi., most of them adding xiii. 7-9. On this view the prophet—perhaps himself a Zechariah (the Zechariah, son of Jeberechiah of Isa. viii. 2?)—appeared in the northern kingdom. But his words seem to lack the moral depth of his predecessors'. And, in fact, there is now a disposition¹ to place these oracles late in the post-exilic period.

Not even prophecy could save the northern State. It fell; and the centre of interest perforce is transferred to Jerusalem and its king, both of whom immediately gained in religious and social importance. The smaller State may be compared to Gideon's 300—an insignificant force, yet all the fitter for the realising of God's spiritual purposes. Hitherto its history had been chiefly an echo of what passed in the north. The

¹ Stade quoted by W. R. Smith; Wellhausen in *Encyclopædia Britannica*. On the other hand Kuenen (in his *Introduction* to the Hexateuch) still places Zech. ix.-xi. in this period. If Isaiah developed (Driver) the doctrine of the personal Messiah, as opposed to the dynastic hope, we should need to put this portion of Zechariah later, at any rate, than Isaiah.

Tyrian influence was strong in both kingdoms, and, by the crime of Athaliah, lasted even longer in Judah than in Israel. But the recoil when Joash was placed on the throne must have strengthened Jehovaism, and must have given *éclat* to the temple whose high-priest, Jehoiada, had borne so conspicuous a part in the national uprising. Henceforward the kings of Judah are on good terms with the religious authorities during several reigns. The historical books blame certain things in them all; but this censure is pronounced from the standpoint of a later generation. With Ahaz, indeed, there came a change. But the period of the weak and wicked Ahaz was also the period of Isaiah, whose was the truly royal influence at that time. To say nothing of the prophecies of Immanuel, given in the reign of Ahaz, we find Isaiah's work crowned, in the time of Hezekiah, by the destruction of Sennacherib's army, and by the reforms undertaken by Hezekiah, who was now completely under the guidance of the great prophet.

It is difficult for us to realise the immense importance of this transaction. Much of what we are accustomed to carry as far back as the crossing of the Red Sea really belongs to this great crisis. Hezekiah's policy had been weak, foolish, vacillating; Isaiah could¹ not pronounce approval on the whole of it. (Had Shebna overborne his influence?) But, in the end, Hezekiah had returned to the allegiance to which he stood pledged, only to find² that the Assyrian broke faith with him. Again Jehovah's cause was the cause of right against wrong, of the oppressed against the tyrant. Again the heathen power, drunk with successes, was so infatuated as to challenge Jehovah to a religious war. With a sublime confidence the prophet maintained the assurance that God would defend the right; that the city of God should be inviolate; and that the heathen army should melt away by some mysterious disaster. God kept His word to the prophet; the proud foe was struck down, and lost all; Judah was new born into an enthusiastic confidence in the God of righteousness

¹ Driver, p. 69.

² *Ib.* p. 77.

and of victory. We hear the echoes of that great triumph almost beyond a doubt in Psalms xlvi. and xlviiii.—possibly in others (*e.g.* lxxv.).

Yet Isaiah was not one of the unmoral prophets, who put a superstitious faith in Jehovah's power, as if it was at the service of the people independently of moral conditions. Such men gave much trouble to Jeremiah; and very likely they leant on Isaiah's word, vulgarising it, as little men do the words of greater and purer men. But Isaiah himself had a more developed soteriology. Only a *remnant*, he thought, could be saved. The nation must go through sore chastisement. In point of fact, we know that deliverance from the Assyrian did not lead to the final consummation of God's kingdom, and therefore brought no more than a temporary respite from trouble. Yet that interval may have had the greatest value. Perhaps it allowed Isaiah to educate and consolidate his circle of disciples (viii. 16, 17), who formed the beginnings of a spiritual church even in Old Testament days. That may be doubtful. More certain is it that the breathing space before the Babylonian period gave room both for Hezekiah's partial reforms, conceived in a Deuteronomic spirit, and, after the terrible reaction under Manasseh, for Josiah's more thorough reform, carried out by way of counter reaction under the direct guidance of the Book of Deuteronomy. And it is certain that these reforms helped the exiles to hold together in Babylon, and paved the way for the reconstitution of the State after the Captivity, under the control of the complete Levitical scheme. Even Jeremiah, who was specially called to induce the people to submit at Jehovah's command, looked forward to a future connection of true religion with Jerusalem and the land of promise. It is no doubt the case, as Kuenen says, that Jeremiah's predictions of a return helped to work their own fulfilment. They were among the providential agencies used for that purpose.

Thus the battle between the prophetic and the popular religions ended in a compromise. Substantially, the prophets

won; else God had broken off His work half accomplished. But the victory of the prophets was suicidal. The law very speedily killed out prophecy, at least in its old form. Zechariah and Haggai could not really emulate 'the former prophets.' Previously, while the relations between Jehovah and Israel were loose and indefinite, a prophet might make just as much of the people's life as God made of the prophet's own. There were infinite possibilities in the prophetic word. But the ritual side of religion proved too strong for the prophets. They had rather despised it—looked on it as a human weakness—treated it as a matter of course, to be settled by human judgment—always provided that the laws of morality were not infringed by it. But morality was infringed by the popular religion, at every turn, till at last the prophets had to deal with the minutiae of ritual for themselves, and, becoming lawyers, ceased to be prophets. Everything in the people's relation to God was fixed, under the Levitical system. It did not need a specially inspired man to tell the Jews (as Malachi tells them) that they ought to pay their tithes. On the whole, much was gained. Idolatry became hateful to the Jews; outward morality made headway, as it never, perhaps, has done with any other nation. But righteousness did not very remarkably flow down the streets of the rebuilt Jerusalem. Still less was the relation of Judaism to Jehovah such a relation of mutual love as Hosea had pleaded for. The world had to wait for that—content, if there was a waiting people of worshippers gathered round the sanctuary of Zion instead of an apostate people—till once more a day of freedom should dawn—a day in which, as never before, 'the true worshippers should worship the Father in the spirit and in truth; since the Father *seeketh such* to worship Him.' All things are for our sakes; the large thoughts of the prophets, the careful precision of the law's pupils¹—we inherit from all alike, God having provided, for us, some better thing.

¹ Both Duhm (*Theologie der Propheten*, p. 13) and W. R. Smith (*Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 314), quote the Apostle Paul's doctrine of the

And now I may perhaps ask the pious reader, whether he cannot recognise God's presence in such a process as what has been described, at least as clearly as he could recognise God's presence in a string of isolated authoritative messages from heaven. That God and men should be in fellowship together—that God should grant men moral discipline as part of their fellowship—and that, in its course, new aspects of truth should be beaten out,—this seems, to me at least, an altogether higher conception of God and of His ways in grace than if we held that He spoke, and again was silent, in accordance with His mere good pleasure. Surely at the present day no one will assert that a thing which grew is any less truly God's than a thing which was produced ready-made by a superfluity of miracle. No! because it grew, it is God's. Your child is God's child because it is yours: it would not be more truly God's if it were manufactured, like the Adam of Genesis, out of dust—but less so, because then it would have no kindred with God's other children of the human race.

Any recognition of the law of development is lacking on the part of the greatest orthodox critic, Delitzsch.¹ He has been forced, again and again, to admit one after another of the facts of development. His scientific conscience has forced him to do this. But he seems to try his hardest to evacuate the facts of all their significance. He clings, with a strange pathetic earnestness, to those rags of tradition which are still within his reach. While he has to admit that Deuteronomy at least is not Mosaic, and that the priestly narrative and code are the latest parts of the Hexateuch, he insists that not only the Decalogue, but the little Book of the Covenant,

law in support of the Graf construction of Old Testament history. I am afraid this will not do. What is the 'covenant' in Jeremiah? 'Obey my voice.' What is the law, considered as a subsequent growth? Ritual. Now, what is the 'covenant' in Paul? The promise. And what is 'the law' that 'came in between'? 'This do and live'='Obey my voice'; moral law, not ritual. For my own part, I cannot think the Apostle is a safe interpreter of the details of Old Testament history.

¹ Introduction to his *New Commentary on Genesis*, T. and T. Clark's translation.

(Exod. xx. 22-xxiii.) is Mosaic, because we are told (xxiv. 4) that 'Moses wrote all the words of the Lord.' And he also insists that Moses said something, wrote something, analogous to Deuteronomy. And, from a comparison of the version of the Decalogue in Exodus with that in Deuteronomy, he infers that Moses' style was 'Jehovistic-Deuteronomic.' That definition is surely extravagantly vague; and no less extravagant seems the Professor's anxiety to prove that when the Bible says 'Moses wrote,' Moses must have written—something; perhaps something quite different—no matter—something. The little Book of the Covenant is a code for an agricultural people. If—as Delitzsch admits—sacred legislation was a long-continued process in Israel, what earthly reason is there for supposing that this agricultural code was communicated to a nomad people? especially as Delitzsch admits that, in the parallel case, we do not possess the alleged Mosaic Deuteronomy.

Still further, having disguised development inside the Old Testament by the help of the rags of tradition, Delitzsch proceeds to curse development in other sciences. 'Lyellism' and 'Darwinism,' if accepted, 'condemn the Christian view of the world as henceforth untenable!' Now Dr. Delitzsch is not an expert in geology or biology. He is an expert in Hebrew; and there, in spite of himself, most reluctantly, he has had to make one concession after another to the facts of development. His repudiation of modern science only throws light on his own intellectual methods. It is a fresh instance of a timid man's attempt to

'Compound for sins he is inclined to
By damning those he has no mind to.'

Dr. Delitzsch has recently given us a brief sketch of his own apologetics in a paper in the *Expositor*,¹ entitled 'The deep gulf between the Old Theology and the New.' Though the paper is impressive by its religious earnestness, I venture to hold that its extemporised theology and metaphysics are pregnant with danger to the Christian cause. There is an absolute

¹ For January 1889.

antithesis, we are told, between God and the world,—another between matter and spirit,—another between nature and grace. Grace is not only ‘*supra naturam*’ but ‘*contra naturam*.’ ‘He who submits himself to this can in his own experience distinguish the supernatural workings of grace from the workings of his natural powers and impulses.’ ‘The whole work of grace . . . is supernatural, and therefore miraculous.’ In this all but Gnostic system, there seems to be no conception of a spiritual order. The ‘law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus’ appears to mean nothing to Prof. Delitzsch, though he quotes the words. ‘If He thunder by law,’ says Tennyson, ‘the thunder is still His voice;’ but the German seems to think differently. Before a Divine message could accredit itself to the eminent Hebraist, God must thunder by fits and starts. Though substantially one may agree with Dr. Delitzsch’s faith as against those whom he criticises, one cannot but repudiate his intellectual assumptions. Science is furnishing us with materials for a new apologetic. In geology, in biology, in the Bible history, God is being revealed to us as working by law and by development—subject to law, though not limited by it. If so-called orthodoxy is to impress its preconceived view of revelation upon the Revealer, and of creation upon the Creator, we are little likely to attain to the truth.

I submit, then, that where Delitzsch is great, as a Hebraist, he is a reluctant witness in favour of development, as the method by which the personal God has chosen to work. And I submit that where Delitzsch attacks development, he is, in spite of his curious self-confidence, a person of no special authority. His introduction to his commentary shirks the results of his critical analysis, and simply assumes the historicity of the whole tradition.

Dillmann is quoted by Delitzsch¹ as ‘taking up an independent separate position’ in his commentary on the Pentateuch (based on Knobel). Delitzsch adds, ‘All the divergences of his analysis, however [from the school of Graf], are of small note before the

¹ *Genesis*, Introduction, p. 26, Eng. tr.

one, that he embraces the pre-exilian origin of the middle books, although he makes the final redaction of the whole take place in the time of Ezra.' Dillmann, however, is a very different writer either from Wellhausen or from Delitzsch. While he has a sober spirit of reverence, and a conservative bias, which distinguish him from the rationalists of the extreme left, he is absolutely untrammelled by tradition, and frankly admits the unhistorical character of much of the Pentateuch (*e.g.* of the details of the tabernacle). He maintains the Mosaic origin of the Decalogue in a brief form. For the rest, he is inclined to save a *maximum* of the history; and he explains the priestly laws, not as *a priori* construction by exilic or post-exilic scribes, but as the codified practices and claims of the priests of the Solomonian temple. That is obviously the conservative alternative which offers itself when men begin to treat the Pentateuchal laws as a late growth. It is an alternative which ought to be carefully gone into: although it seems to me to have the weakness of representing Ezekiel's place midway in the development of legislation as purely an accident, due to his subjective qualities. I do not know whether Prof. Dillmann would agree to what I am saying. And I do not wish to underrate the importance of defending the historicity of a maximum of the contents of the Pentateuch. But my own impression is this,—that the critical differences between Dillmann on one side, and Wellhausen or Kuenen on the other side, are questions of degree and of detail. On both sides it is (generally) admitted that the historical narrative is based upon genuine tradition. On both sides it is admitted that the history is allowed to a greater or less degree with unhistorical matter,—some of it of the nature of *a priori* construction. On both sides it is admitted that the prophets began their work by ignoring or else condemning sacrifice, though subsequently they undertook to regulate it. On both sides it is admitted that the Deuteronomic law of the one altar was an innovation. It may happen that not much orthodox faith is associated with the school of Graf. But that circumstance, I conceive, is largely accidental.

Dillmann has conceded in principle all that orthodox theologians are accustomed to hesitate over. Essentially the same view of the course of religious development in Israel is suggested to a believing mind by each of the two presentations of Old Testament history. If there are important doctrinal differences—and no doubt there are—these may bias, but do not necessarily determine, the opinions held on detailed points of criticism by the respective writers.

Here I may perhaps be allowed to modify what I formerly wrote (in *Christ and the Jewish Law*) regarding the connection between the religion of Israel and previous ethnic religions. I fear I had a tendency towards the formula of the ignorant child, 'God made me *so* big, and I grewed the rest myself.' I fear I was inclined to enlarge the compass of the revelations made at the Exodus, in order that, thereafter, the process of development in Israel might seem to be natural. I now see no objection to saying that God developed the religion of His grace by slow degrees, by almost imperceptible stages, out of a religion which was barely moral. The title of Mozley's Lectures, *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages*, implies, in principle, the whole change, in reference to the Old Testament, from the old dogmatic to the new. Instead of explaining ceremonialism as due to God's arbitrary will, we accept the laws of human nature and human society as relatively given *data*, and we inquire how the Spirit of revelation made use of them and modified them. But I should still refuse, as firmly as ever, the assumption of naturalism, that an earlier stage of the world's religious history must afford a complete explanation of all that is contained in the Bible religion. To take up that position is indeed to deny God; and it is to deny Him for the sake of a prejudice. It is to *take for granted* that the earthly constituents of a Pagan religion are all the historical forces at work in the world. I suspect, indeed, that all consistently worthy views of history depend on our recognition of a living supernatural Spirit who communicates freely with men by the chosen channels of His grace. But it would need a

special inquiry to make good that position. And it is enough for me at present to maintain, that God is the source at least of the Bible history. How indeed did Israel come to differ so far in religion from other peoples? Why was there such a steady succession of prophetic moralists in her? How was it that faith and morality kept on good terms here—grew up together into greater and ever greater life? How was it that the various historical crises were triumphantly passed through? How was Christ's work possible? And how came Christ? What, in a word, made the immense difference, both for the world's moral progress and for the world's religious progress, between Israel and all other nations? Unbelief can only answer, It happened so by accident. Faith can only answer, It happened by God's will; it happened by God's grace.

But, if we are to meet the real difficulties of pious people, we must not confine our attention to the effect of modern criticism upon our views of history. Pious people may admit that the critics allow them to see God in Israel's history; but then they want to see God in the Bible, as they were wont to do. Now, I confess that neither the new criticism nor the new theology allows us to think of God as the author of the Bible in the sense in which Milton is the author of *Paradise Lost*. We have to put God further off from the Bible. It is God's book; but He is not to be held as indorsing all its historical statements, nor even all its doctrines and all its aspirations. I do not wonder that those who, with a childlike faith, have heard God's voice in every syllable of the English Bible, should feel the world grown colder when they hear only the voices of messengers from God. But I submit that, if God is further off from us in the Bible, we meet Him in more ways—in more men, and in more books. Is it not a compensation to think of God's action on the human spirit in such a fashion that, whenever we encounter what is good and true, what is great and wise, we know that God is there? 'The light lighteth every man': let us give thanks for its diffusion, even if, for a moment, we miss its intensity! And, while we

have consciences, God is never far off. 'The word is nigh thee,'—

'Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.'

And, while we have the Christ of history, who is also the Christ of faith, we can see that all the varied influences for good in God's world are claimed as God's, proved to be God's, and given back to us from God by Jesus Christ.

'That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
Or decomposes but to recompose,
Become my universe that feels and knows.'¹

But we must also admit, that the sort of manufactured history which criticism teaches us to recognise, especially in the priestly historians of the Old Testament, gives a shock to our sense of reverence. We should have taken for granted that God would keep such things out of the record of His special revelation. But are we sure that we are competent judges of how God may be expected, or might be desired, to proceed? From the permission of evil downwards, has not God done the opposite of what we should have expected, again and even again? Could there have been a more startling surprise to the faith of an early Christian than to hear that the bulk of the Church catholic to which he belonged was (as we hold) to go fatally wrong—to be nicknamed 'Antichrist' by many evangelical Christians? Let us try to get rid of the varnish of habit, and to see the fact in its native monstrousness. I know many pious people believe that Scripture foretold the Romish apostasy. I do not believe it. But let that pass; could even plain predictions much mitigate the bewilderment and dismay with which a Christian should learn, for the first time, that God was going to allow the Church, which He had purchased with the blood of Christ, to drift in great proportion into almost fatal error? When one looks at the earliest Church, after the apostolic age, it seems to one as if God's providence had tossed the Church adrift, as we throw a young

¹ Browning: *An Epilogue*.

dog into the water in order to teach it to swim;—when one sees the Church struggling from peril to peril, and from corruption to corruption, one is tempted to doubt God's providence or the reality of His revelation. Has all this no moral? May we not learn that men are to gain something in Christ's service which infallible guidance would only have kept from them? Is it not possible, that God in a manner hides Himself from His children, that each one apart, and all unitedly, may search for God, and find him? The moral assurance of faith is higher than any miraculous pledge, needful though that is in its place. The experimental knowledge of God is more than all systems of revealed truth. That knowledge 'is life eternal.' And it is no small moral relief to be done with the mass of ineffectual arguments with which Scriptural 'difficulties' used to be covered out of sight.

Therefore I think we may accept the possibility of idealised and even of doctored history in the Bible. We shall do well to be cautious, reverent, slow, in admitting the actual existence of such history; but we shall do better to be candid in making the admission, if we are shown good grounds for it. The Law is, for the most part, of an archæological or antiquarian interest merely. It is not well to fight against this fact by doggedly spiritualising our way through thick and thin. The really vital parts of the Old Testament are the Psalms and Prophets, and some of the Wisdom literature. Any one who fails to reverence these is indeed in a hopeless case. They are among the Divinest gifts of God to men. If we approach the Old Testament from the right side, every wise and good man will know how to prize it. On the other hand, much of the history, like the law, may have little more than an antiquarian interest. When people blame the Old Testament, for mixing Judaism with Christianity, they are generally thinking of the priestly historians. Their writings show us how good men, at a certain stage in God's education of the Church, thought it necessary to conceive of God's past dealings with them. To know this is interesting, and may be of profit to

us, though its devotional use must be carefully guarded. Greater are the *facts*, so far as we can learn them, of God's dealings with men in the Old Testament ages. Greatest of all is God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ. This Christians have always had, and therefore have had sufficiency at all times of historical knowledge. While we have the sunlight, need we anxiously count the number of candles left to us?

My first chapter has been a mass of rather doubtful disputations. I am glad to be able to assure the reader, that we shall have more to do with certainties in Chapter II.

II.

The thesis which I have now to maintain is this,—that the Old Testament contains a large amount of moral and spiritual piety which has no hope of a future life.

Traditional orthodoxy is tempted to dispute this thesis, because it insists upon reading Christian ideas into all the piety of the Old Testament. Modern criticism, on the other hand, is tempted to exaggerate the traces of an infra-moral and unspiritual religion, which are to be found in the Old Testament. We do not pretend to settle here how these should be handled. Apart from these lies the significant fact for us,—the fact that within the unquestionably moral and spiritual periods or portions of Old Testament piety, we find great spaces unilluminated by the hope of immortality.

Naturally, we get most of our evidence for this statement from the Book of Psalms. 'In death there is no remembrance of thee; in Sheol who shall give thee thanks?' (vi. 5.) 'Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?' (xxx. 9.) But, not to quote here other passages from the Psalms, we have in the prayer attributed to Hezekiah (Isa. xxxviii.) a very full exhibition of the mind of a pious Israelite when death seemed near him. If it be true, as Cheyne holds, that the prayer is later than Hezekiah's time, our case is all the stronger. Must we carry down into the exile period or later the state of mind

here depicted? 'The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth' (vv. 18, 19.) There is much that is very beautiful, and, for an Old Testament writer, far advanced, in this lyric; there is faith, and resignation, and the sense that 'by these things men live.' But, at the back of all, what hopeless darkness,—what undisguised, unrelieved despair!

This impression is confirmed in us when we inquire how the Psalmists treat those topics which most strongly suggest to Christian minds the hope of a personal immortality. Let us take, for example, Ps. xc. According to Isaac Taylor (quoted by Perowne), 'wrapped, one might say, in mystery, until the distant day of revelation should come, there is here conveyed the doctrine of immortality . . . the thought of a life eternal is here in embryo.' Perfectly true. But how far the Psalmist is from consciousness of this! 'Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations:' what does he infer from this? That God 'is not the God of the dead, but of the living'? 'Because I live, ye shall live also,'—does he attain to that thought? By no means. When he prays for God's mercy, he asks for experience of it within the earthly life. 'Satisfy us in the morning with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad *all our days*. Make us glad, *according to the days* wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.' When he prays for immortality, it is for the eternal life of God's covenant, or for a continued personal share in the covenant only through one's children or through the results of one's life. 'Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory *unto their children*. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and *establish thou the work of our hands* upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.' Such are the correlative thoughts in the Psalmist's mind to the thought of God's eternity. This glimpse into Israelitish piety strangely reminds us of modern Positivism. It is a sort of Positivism,

but Positivism *plus* the living God; and therefore a living, growing, helpful, nourishing system, a system with the promise of indefinite expansion, instead of a poor dead contrivance of human artifice.

Psalm xc. is attributed to Moses. And, while some may reject the tradition, and some conjecture that a later saint threw himself dramatically into the significant circumstances of the great man of God, there may be others who will insist on treating Ps. xc. as early, and as constituting no fair sample of the faith of believing Israel on such a point as the after life. Let us turn therefore to a parallel passage in a Psalm which carries on its front the evidence that it was written during the exile. The singer of Ps. cii. 'overwhelmed with affliction, pouring out his complaint before the Lord,' bethinks him of the tremendous contrast between mortal man, or the whole decaying world, and God the immortal maker of both. 'He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.' What is the correlative thought? '*The children* of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.' The very thoughts which convey to us the belief that God cannot 'leave us in the dust' conveyed a different message to our spiritual ancestors under the old covenant.

Or we might quote the parallelism of Ps. ciii. verse 17, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him'—how does the second clause vary the expression? 'His righteousness is unto children's children.' Such was the immortality, such the eternal life, which satisfied, or at least comforted and strengthened, the singers of so many tender, spiritual psalms.

We are taught the same lesson when we ask, what was the traditional theory of the death of the righteous. The fullest picture perhaps is in Job v. After depicting the blessedness of the righteous, chastened man in various particulars, Eliphaz adds, 'Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in its season' (vv. 25, 26). Such was the theory of the 'death of the righteous' and of his 'last end' (Numbers xxiii. 10). So too in the Book of Proverbs, 'Length of days is in Wisdom's right hand' (iii. 16). 'By me thy days shall be multiplied' (ix. 11). 'The fear of the Lord prolongeth days' (x. 27), etc. etc. So, in the Decalogue, we must suppose that individuals are addressed as well as the nation; 'Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee' (Ex. xx. 12). And so, too, in our chief source, the Book of Psalms. The crown of all that is promised in that deeply spiritual poem, Ps. xci., is 'with long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation' (ver. 16). And the sweetest utterance of trust in God, Ps. xxiii., ends with the exclamation, 'I will dwell in the house of the Lord,' not, as our versions have it, 'for ever,' but 'for length of days.' All this implies that the Old Testament religion had no distinct dogma explaining the universality of death by the universality of sin. Sudden, painful, premature death was the penalty of special sin. Peaceful, honoured, long-delayed death, like Job's, was the last reward of the righteous. Or if he had one other privilege, it was to leave behind him a posterity prepared to carry on God's work. Thus Cheyne reads and renders in Ps. xxii., 'I would fain rehearse thy name unto my brethren' (ver. 23, Heb.). 'And as for him that kept not his soul alive, his seed shall be reckoned unto Jehovah; To the next generation they shall rehearse his righteousness, to a people that shall be born, that he hath done nobly' (vv. 31, 32). This distinguished expositor adds the comment, "'31. One generation goeth, and another cometh.'" But there is comfort in the thought that *we* shall have trained

our successors to the service of God. My strength may be brought down, and my days shortened (sings Israel personified, cii. 24; comp. 19), but a new generation shall fill up that which remaineth. Suffer me to live on earth till the tradition of God's might be firmly fixed in Israel (lxxi. 18; compare above, ver. 23, similarly xlvi. 14, lxxviii. 4).'

Again, there is light for us in one of the emotional phrases of Hebrew poetry. 'The land of the living' is this present world; this world of darkness, uncertainty, decay, this land of the dying is, to the Hebrew singer, 'the land of the living.' Let us not misjudge him. It is not *only* the natural love of life which makes him cling to it; there is a supernatural, a religious motive besides. Hezekiah's lament ran, 'I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living.' The Psalmist, restored to life and health, sings with rejoicing, 'I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living' (cxvi. 9). Cheyne surely urges to a ridiculous extreme the identification of every psalmist with Israel; but, even if Israel be meant in such a passage as the above, must not the individual have explored its meaning for himself before he could transfer its meaning to his nation? Again, another Psalm (xxvii. 13) gives us the eager cry, 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living,'—or, as Perowne renders, 'Oh, did I not believe to see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living!' a pregnant aposiopesis. Cheyne corrects, 'I am confident of beholding,' etc., and finds that this passage is probably alluded to in Ps. cxvi. This correction somewhat weakens the impression the words would otherwise make, though it does not involve any substantial change. If we accept the Massoretic text, I know of no more pathetic verse in the whole of Old Testament scripture. It gives us the picture of a believing soul, with nothing standing between him and utter despair but the chance of recovery from sickness. God gave him his desire; it was well with him, and well for us, as many as use his Psalm, that God heard him and raised him up. But what an imperfect, what a precarious faith

was that which was suspended on what we are apt to call the chance course of an illness,—which was suspended, let us rather say, upon that with which God does not allow us to intermeddle, upon a particular event in a department of Providence where God would have us absolutely, unquestioningly, submissive to His will. A noble faith breathes in the Psalm,—but a faith very far short of the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Other instances of the phrase are perhaps less significant (Job xxviii. 13; Ps. lii. 5, cxlii. 5 [cf. lvi. 13]; Isa. liii. 8; Jer. xi. 19; Ezek. xxvi. 20; xxxii. 23, 24, etc.). But the phrases used by way of contrast are full of meaning. We have 'the land of forgetfulness' in Ps. lxxxviii.,—'Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall they that are deceased [Rephaim] arise and praise thee? Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in Destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?' (vv. 10-12.) And in Job (x. 21, 22) we have the magnificent description, 'The land of darkness and of the shadow of death; a land of thick darkness, as darkness itself, a land of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.'

But perhaps Ps. xxxix. gives us a clearer view than any other passage affords of the struggle of human piety against the unrelieved fear of death. The gentle chastened faith of this Psalm, 'the most beautiful,' according to Ewald, 'of all the elegies in the Psalter,' has its own peculiar fragrance. Some Psalmists rose so high in their faith, that they laughed at death, and by the logic of feeling proclaimed the life eternal, as we might almost say, before its time. Other singers approached a similar faith through long agonies of doubt, refusing the apparent limitations of their lot, extorting deeper promises from the seeming reluctance of heaven, as if taking the Kingdom of God by violence. But this unknown man had no capacity for winning such triumphs. What he most fears is to speak unwisely or irreverently about the great

God. He is no innovator. The faith, the hope, that was good enough for his fathers, must surely be good enough for him. He does not presume so far as to ask a new thing from God. In happier days he might have sung as sweet a strain as Ps. xxiii. But his lot has been darkened, and his song must needs be pitched in a minor key. Hardly does he dare to approach God; he fears to offend Him. He sees now too plainly what all thoughtful hearts must one day perceive, the emptiness and idleness of men's hot strife for gain and glory, while within a few years they must enter the silence of the grave. 'Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.' Yet, sorely grieved and saddened as he is, he turns instinctively to God. His is a reconciled heart. 'My hope is in thee.' He prays that he may profit by the trouble God has sent him; that, if he lives on, he may live more wisely; and, if it please God, he prays that he may be spared a little before he 'goes hence, and is no more'; for, as he expresses it, letting us into one of the secrets of Old Testament piety, 'I am a stranger with thee, a sojourner, as all my fathers were.' God is the host; the passing generation of men are guests at His table, banqueting with Him for a little, and enjoying the splendour of His gifts, then out into the darkness. Our Psalmist does not dare to murmur at the conditions of his lot, as he apprehends them. He only asks that, if it so please God, he may see out his full time in God's gracious presence. So deep was this Psalmist able to go in humility and submissiveness towards God, though a faith which removes mountains was not his.

And indeed there are times when we could almost envy the Psalmist his view of life. There are times when we feel as if human life, lifted so high as to be capable of communion with God, and not lifted so high as to pass into the region of the eternities, were more suited to our real weakness. There are times when we tremble and shrink under the burden of eternal

hopes and eternal fears—when we would fain relapse into the humbler position of ‘strangers and sojourners with God.’ It is useless. Every age has its own burdens; we cannot evade our own; we should be no happier if we could. And, after all, these fears are only the vapours of sickness. God’s fact is sure to prove better than man’s fancy.

But here perhaps it is necessary to consider how the popular doctrine of Sheol affects the representation of Old Testament piety which we have been giving. For it is possible so to present the doctrine of Sheol as to imply that ‘from the very beginning of the old economy the immortality of the soul and a future state of unending existence were revealed and were believed.’¹ We can only do this, however, if we are willing to deprive ourselves of all real insight into the courses of Hebrew thought. To the Hebrews Sheol never meant what could be called immortality.

I have described the doctrine as a popular belief. That seems the most probable view which we can take of it. But it has left its traces in the language and in the imagery of many a prophet—notably in Isaiah xiv., in Ezekiel (ch. xxxii.), and in the Book of Job. The author of Ps. xlix., as we shall see presently, continues to think of the state of the unredeemed dead as an existence in Sheol: and even Jesus Sirach appears content with the traditional view of the world to come. To us, in our enlightened age, death means extinction. Having laid down this general principle, on rational grounds, we proceed to qualify it in the case of mankind, and particularly of Christian men. The early races of mankind behaved differently. They conceived of death not logically, but imaginatively, emotionally, as a state of being opposite in quality to life—life’s antithesis, but still a kind of being or shadowy existence. No one can have missed this in the classics; no one can fail to perceive that, in reading of the Hebrew Sheol, he is on similar ground to his classical reading. It may be hard to say what originated this strange picture of life in death; possibly dreams,

¹ W. H. Green, *Argument of the Book of Job*, p. 359.

possibly animistic superstition. The origin of a theory is no sufficient test of its strength. We must ask not only, How did it arise? but How did it live on? And evidently this half-superstitious belief lived on as a protest against the crushing conception of entire extinction. It evidently drew secret support from those moral motives and impulses which always have made men crave for immortality, and always must do so. Reflection was certain to be fatal to the doctrine of Sheol. It had no logical evidence in its favour; and indeed its loss was not much to be regretted: it never comforted any one. But meantime it held the field as a protest against man's mortality, and as the forerunner of a better doctrine of life in the world to come.

We take it, then, that the spirit of revelation accommodated itself to this popular conception, and made provisional use of it. But if any one insists that God revealed the doctrine from heaven, let him have his way. Let it be the doctrine was revealed. But what was revealed? A state of being where God was not; where praise was not; where joy was not; where hope was not—a state of being into which every soul without exception passed at death; where all the differences of the earth gave place to a monotony of darkness and desolation. Such a doctrine had no religious function. It was the sombre background of life and piety; piety was confined to the foreground of the picture, to life with its historical memories and historical hopes. Sheol was not even conceived as the wages of sin. It was no moral destiny, but a natural destiny—a fate. The imaginative description of life in Hades follows either the idea of a *shadowy* existence, or else attributes to the soul consciousness of the processes of the decaying body (Job xiv. 22). Mr. Cheyne assumes a special superstition in explanation of this representation. A second soul, he thinks, was fabled to inhabit the decaying body—a second body to accompany the disembodied soul.¹ Do we need any such elaborate explanation? In trying to follow the soul beyond the limits of known

¹ On Isa. lxvi. 24.

experience, is it not natural that men should confuse the soul's career with that of its old partner the body?

Some readers may be shocked at the thought of God's grace having mixed itself up with such unworthy and false descriptions of God's ultimate purpose. Others will feel edified at the thought of God's manifold wisdom, speaking to every age in a dialect which it can understand, leading in all ages to a fuller truth, until, in the final consummation of God's purposes, all faithful souls shall rejoice together. We may do something to explain this doctrine by reminding ourselves that the religion of Israel was a tribal religion. Only by slow degrees did it become a spiritual religion, and therefore a personal religion, and therefore ripe for the hope of immortality. And, even when it embraced personal piety and personal hopes, it remained the religion of a race, waiting for its complete transformation, its complete spiritualisation, through the work of Christ. Despite many a grievous sin, it had grown up into readiness for the Saviour. We are tempted to call its belief in God supernatural religion, its belief in duty natural religion. And it is true that the ideas of duty and guilt permanently verify themselves to the experience of cultured mankind more immediately, more irresistibly, than the ideas of God's presence and of His providential working do. But to Israel, at the first, belief in Jehovah was natural religion—belief in duty and in the moral character of Jehovah was arduously, painfully supernatural. Yet moral teaching awakened a response in the elect 'remnant' of the people, and offered leverage by which their religious trust in God might be raised to a more spiritual level.—But these remarks are more or less conjectural. The nature of the Israelitish belief in Sheol, on the other hand, can be proved by demonstrative evidence; and therefore we have demonstrative proof that God did not reveal truth ready-made from heaven, in the shape of correct ideas, but revealed it in the reactions of life. While He condescended for a time to inadequate views of truth, God put His servants into healthful relations of obedience towards Him, and correct

views came of themselves. Not without cost indeed! We cover a great deal of ground with that glib phrase, 'correct views came of themselves.' Men had to agonise their way to higher truth. Yet it was wholly—both process and result—God's excellent gift. As a moral Being, training His children for a moral life, a moral fellowship, a moral glory, He never remits His moral discipline, but confers His very gifts in a moral fashion.

We have still another point to notice in regard to the early forms of spiritual piety in the Old Testament. As God's rewards were thought to be given during life, so were His punishments. 'Behold,' say the Proverbs (xi. 31), 'the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: how much more the wicked and the sinner!' a phrase intensely characteristic of the Old Testament spirit; we shall have to notice it again. This doctrine was held broadly, without qualification; as by Job's three friends, or as in Ps. i. A cautious and reverent modern inquirer, like Bishop Butler, concludes that 'there is a kind of moral government implied in God's natural government,'—that 'the beginnings of a righteous administration may beyond all question be found in nature.'¹ The Hebrew wise men took this general truth as if it were exactly and exhaustively true; out of which grew trouble, when reflection deepened and the individual's lot was more studied; but out of the trouble came good,—as we shall see in due course. Had the life of the old covenant been an uninterrupted series of miracles, immediately revealing God and His will,—as some perhaps suppose,—then there would have been no difficulties for faith to encounter; but also, there would have been no opportunity given faith for arriving at deeper attainments. At first, the Old Testament conceived the moral problem as one affecting families. The lot of the sinner 'and his children' interested the anxious saint. The Second Commandment in the Decalogue is the classical passage for this mood of thought. And we are led to insist on a certain antiquity for the Decalogue by finding

¹ *Analogy*, i. chap. 3.

that the Deuteronomist, who represents a more spiritual conception of individual rights and sins (xxiv. 16), retains the words of threatening in the Second Commandment. This mood of mind is in its nature archaic. It confuses man's moral personality with his social surroundings. But we must beware of thinking that moral archaisms are always historical antiquities. Every complex historical series contains anachronisms; and several of the Bible historians take pleasure in representing the older less moral view of personality as the one which had God's immediate sanction.

Under the influence of strong faith in God and zeal for His glory, and having no adequate counterbalancing sense of love to man as man, Old Testament piety often tries Christian readers by its hunger for justice on the wicked. The imprecatory Psalms are like blots upon the lovely book in which they occur. To try to tune our own emotions in accord with theirs, as some superstitiously orthodox persons would have us do, would be simple rebellion against Christ. But let us understand how the imprecations came there. With a healthy zeal for God and righteousness, with a somewhat callous humanity, and a somewhat ill-developed sense of personal sin, the Hebrew saint looked out into the world. God's justice was what he sought to verify: God's justice was what—confining his inquiry, as he did, to the present life—he often necessarily failed to verify. Hence his wild anguish; hence his feverish urgency, that God should, at last, show himself and 'slay the wicked.' Hence the hot breath of cursing which withers our souls again and again in the midst of the sweetest and tenderest utterances of faith. The idea of God and the sense of personal sin, as distinguished from the sin of others, were both defective. The Old Testament spirit was *borné*. But it had the capacity of growth. And, if we do not try to develop ourselves backwards to the imperfections or errors of the Old Testament, we shall find that the wholesome, crude, but essentially right spirit of the imprecatory psalmists is a raw material out of which God is going to produce the Christian spirit. We must keep

as Christians all the zeal for righteousness of the cursing psalmists, but we must associate zeal with tenderness and humility, with mercy and love.

The point which I specially desire the reader to notice for the purpose of my argument is this,—that the spiritual piety of the Old Testament comes to us, in the first instance, associated with a view of the future state which is manifestly and confessedly false. God, we must presume, tolerated that doctrine in the lips of His servants, because it was the nearest thing to the truth which men were fit to receive. And afterwards, we shall see, truth came not in a supernatural burst, but bit by bit, through the natural working of the life of faith and obedience and suffering, as men grew worthy of more truth.

I ask the reader to keep these facts in mind.

III.

Under the direct progress made by the Old Testament religion in the doctrines which we are studying, we reckon two distinct phenomena,—(A) the series of eschatologies put forth by the prophets, and (B) the individual postulate of immortality, contained in some of the Psalms.

A. The prophetic eschatologies are merely one application of the principles with which the prophets were intrusted by God. We do wrong when we bestow predominant attention on this 'predictive' aspect of their work. But we should also do wrongly if we ignored these eschatologies. It was impossible for the prophets to refrain from giving some picture of that final condition of things which God's grace was at last to establish. And we, as students of the doctrine of immortality, are interested in these pictures, because, not uniformly, but here and there, they cross the boundary line of the supernatural, and in the last resort, after a long development, inscribe in the orthodox faith of Israel the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. But, in the Old Testament itself, it cannot be said that the religious faith of the people ever shows a response to

this doctrine developed by prophecy. The religious consciousness of Israel, more strictly so called, has its own developments, which we shall study in the second section of this chapter and in the next chapter. These developments point to a doctrine of personal immortality. But, however late we may put some of the Psalms, or other Old Testament scriptures, there remains a singular difference in tone between their view of the future life and the developed supernaturalism of New Testament times.

In the prophets, soteriology proper and eschatology are connected as members in a time series. First comes the process of purgation; then comes blessedness for God's chastened people. Though we reckon the prophetic eschatologies to the direct growth of Old Testament thought and faith, it must be borne in mind that they depict the final state in sharp contrast to the religious condition of the prophets' own time—that this contrast is one of their motives—and that, accordingly, the failure (even through man's sin) of Old Testament religion in the immediate present is a condition of those higher revelations to which the prophetic eschatologies contribute, and which the New Testament crowns and consummates.

Amos, whose book we reckon—fragments apart—as the earliest written prophecy, has a very brief and simple sketch of the days of perfecting (ix. 11-15). The Davidic empire is to be restored; all nations who have at any time been subject to Jehovah's dominion are again to be vassal states of Israel; and great peace and happiness are to reign within the righteous land. There is nothing supernatural in this *naïf* picture. Elsewhere in his book (v. 18) we meet with a phrase which has an important career before it—'the day of the Lord.' Formerly it was held that Amos alluded to Joel here,—and elsewhere. But surely Amos is for the first time putting a spiritual meaning on the phrase he uses. He encounters the phrase on the lips of the unmoral popular Jehovah worshippers, who held that, if their God would but intervene, all must be well with them. No, replies Amos; God is a righteous judge; He draws near in punishment (iii. 2); therefore the day of the Lord is a

day to be dreaded. More elaborate treatment of the theme, especially when it is so highly developed as in Joel, must surely be subsequent to Amos.

Hosea does not conclude with an imaginative portrait of the coming golden age, but with a burst of tenderness, in which, allowing himself to take for granted the repentance of the people, he dwells lovingly on the mutual vows which they will exchange with Jehovah. At the end of his first prophetic book, however (iii. 5; cf. also i. 11), he gives a bare sketch of the return of the people to God and to the Davidic dynasty 'in the latter days.' This is another highly important phrase, which proves to be the direct progenitor of the New Testament and Rabbinical phrase 'world to come.' We have a somewhat fuller picture of these 'latter days' in the (probably) anonymous oracle which is quoted (as we may assume) both by Isaiah (ii. 2-4) and by Micah (iv. 1-3). 'The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains,' etc. etc. All nations shall cultivate the religion of the God of Israel, and peace shall everywhere prevail. It is not easy to tell whether the elevation of Mount Zion is meant to be spiritual only, or physical as well. Hebrew piety knew nothing of our sharp distinction of nature and the supernatural. God they knew—imperfectly, yet growingly; but God's 'general laws of wisdom' they had not recognised. It is also hard to say how the expression 'latter days,' or 'after part of the days' came into use. Jeremiah (xxiii. 20; xxx. 24), the cognate book, Deuteronomy (iv. 30; xxxi. 29), and Ezekiel (xxxviii. 8)¹ employ it in a sorrowful sense, in connection with threatenings. But Jeremiah also uses it in a good sense (xlviii. 47; xlix. 39) of the final blessing, as it is used in the passages we are now considering. The expression is also put into the lips of the dying Jacob (Gen. xlix. 1), and of Balaam (Num. xxiv. 14) in connection with the predictions attributed to them. To these patriarchal men, naturally, the days in which the historian wrote, who quotes the oracles ascribed to them, might well

¹ 'Latter years.'

seem 'the last days.' Was it from this usage that the phrase was introduced? At any rate, in the passage contained in Isaiah and Micah, we seem to see a prophet looking forward consciously over an intervening barrier of years or ages to a final time of notable, though hardly supernatural, peace and blessedness. Prophecy does not long retain this calm, far-seeing glance. As the fortunes of Israel get more closely mixed up with the history of the world-empires, that 'prophetic impatience' is developed with which we are so familiar that we are apt to consider it an invariable mark of the prophetic spirit,—an impatience which conceives that the consummation of all things must follow close on the heels of the next great visibly impending crisis of history. If we are right in supposing that this 'impatience' is absent from the oracle in Isaiah and Micah, it is no small proof of the self-consciousness and maturity of the prophetic religion, that it should, at so early a stage, when no great events forced it to produce a philosophy of history, already have announced the absoluteness of spiritual religion, already claimed the consummation of human history as belonging to Jehovah for the manifesting of His glory.

As the *Assyrian* power comes into collision with Judah, the prophetic scheme of the future is more nearly defined in relation to existing social forces. Isaiah and Micah look to a great and searching 'day of the Lord' (Isa. ii. 12), as a consequence of which it shall be manifested that salvation does not lie in any finite institution, but only in God Himself. But final salvation is expected immediately after the great day of trial, in a somewhat idealised continuance of existing social and religious conditions, without any supernatural change passing over the life of the people. When the Assyrian miraculously fails before Jerusalem, Isaiah expects all the world to come over to the faith of Jehovah. The personal Messiah, prominent in both Isaiah and Micah, is one of the instruments through whom, at times, they expect to see God acting.¹ In the *Chaldean*

¹ If Zech. ix.-xi. belongs to this period, it practically coincides with Isaiah and Micah.

period God's judgment seems to grow more imminent again. Zephaniah depicts the 'day of the Lord' as total destruction. The Messiah does not figure in his book. Jeremiah and Ezekiel echo the prophecies of a Messiah, but give them a subordinate place. Jeremiah announces that the success of the Chaldeans is God's will, and that, after a limited period of exile, God will restore His people under a new and more spiritual 'covenant,' etc. etc. If Habakkuk seems not to feel the necessity of Israel falling captive to the Chaldeans, we can only conclude that, while he rightly bore witness to God's abiding faithfulness to His people and to His promises, the prophet's insight in other directions was limited. Ezekiel adds, among other things, one curious and very apocalyptic trait to his picture of the future. According to Orelli,¹ 'the judgment on the city belongs already, in his view, to the past; on the other hand, what the prophets had long before said about an ineffectual storming of Jerusalem, is still to come.' The prophet seems to ask, How is a transition to be made from the known world of strife and danger to the ideal world of peace which religion announces for the future? And the answer seems to come to him, that the heathen will make one last onset on the people of God—shall undergo one last defeat from God Himself—after which all will go well.

With the prophetic interpretation of the Chaldean conquest as God's great judgment of the world, we may compare Psalm l. Not that it is, in strictness, an apocalyptic picture. It is rather a vision of future though near judgment, and a summons to immediate repentance. In the book of Psalms it stands alone—many as the parallels are to it in the prophets (Ps. lxxv. has differences)—as a picture of 'judgment beginning at the house of God.' It could not fail to constitute an important element in eschatological belief, as soon as men began to work up the various representations of the future struck out by prophetic inspiration into one coherent picture.

It is however in the occasional prophecies which have been

¹ *Old Testament Prophecy*, T. and T. Clark's translation.

incorporated in the first half of the book of Isaiah, but which internal evidence refers to the period of the Exile, that we meet with the most important apocalyptic eschatologies. The personal Messiah does not figure in them. The personal Messiah is conceived in the Old Testament as continuing, though with improvements, the Davidic system; whereas the eschatological sketches now before us use a bolder imagery. The leading passage occurs in chapters xxiv. *seq.* It gives the old picture—first judgment, then salvation; first misery, then peace. Most remarkable is it that the abolition of death is distinctly promised (xxv. 7, 8)—a clearly supernatural trait. And, later on, in view of the weakness of the living members of God's Church—so to call it—(xxvi. 18), it is promised that dead saints shall be restored by a resurrection (xxvi. 19) to take their part in the toils and in the triumphs of the age to come. The image of resurrection, as applied to the nation, is frequent in the prophets. Hosea uses it (vi. 2; xiii. 14), and Ezekiel (xxxvii.). Even in Ezekiel it is not meant to imply personal resurrection. Had he attained to that thought, Ezekiel must have given a different cast to his theology as a whole (*e.g.* to his doctrine of retribution, chap. xviii.). But, in a prophecy which explicitly abrogates death for the living, we can only understand resurrection of dead saints as literally meant. Besides, the contrast of ver. 14 confirms this view.¹ Dead sinners, we are there told, are dead for ever. There is no conception as yet of a resurrection of the unjust.

A second short apocalypse (Isa. xiii.-xiv. 23) is noticeable as transferring the great 'day of the Lord' to the new circumstances of God's vengeance on Babylon. The third is full of imagery repeated in the New Testament, but is otherwise of no special importance for us. It directs its chief attention to Edom (xxxiv.). Some would add here Jeremiah l. li.²

Did the author of chapters xxiv.-xxvii. literally believe that

¹ Another rendering—'dead men do not live, the deceased do not rise'—shows us the prophet's mind groping its way to a fuller faith.

² Duhm, *Theologie der Propheten*, p. 302.

a resurrection of the dead would accompany his people's restoration to their own land? Or was that a flight of faith which, in colder moments, he himself would have treated as poetical imagery? At any rate, in the eschatological section with which the great prophecy Isa. xl.-lxvi. closes, death is recognised as continuing even in the ideal period when God's purpose is fully accomplished (lxv. 20). Death is to be postponed, not abolished; and we hear nothing of resurrection. Again, do the closing verses portend future torment? Is the old picture of Sheol being darkened down into the colours of Gehenna (cf. Job xiv. 22)? So Dr. Cheyne thinks—as also (still more strangely) he finds future punishment in l. 11. For this view he quotes Jewish writings and the New Testament. One apocryphal passage at any rate—Ecclesiasticus vii. 17—seems to me to afford very doubtful support to his contention. Throughout his book Jesus Sirach seems to anticipate nothing but Hades after the earthly life¹ (xiv. 11-19; xvii. 27, 28, 30; xxii. 11—see Cheyne's note, as below). And shall we not bewilder ourselves if we interpret Old Testament phrases by New Testament allusions? What we have here is an imaginative picture of a great judgment on God's enemies which shall for ever supply material for fear and reverence to God's people dwelling in Jerusalem. We are dealing with symbols, and I take it with conscious symbols on the part of the writer. None the less, his language was afterwards literalised—unquestionably; and the fact is important. But the fact that, to him, death is not abolished, seems to me conclusive against Cheyne's view. A prosperous but limited earthly life for the saved, flanked by eternal torment for the lost, makes up a patchwork theology of the most extravagant kind.

¹ As Cheyne himself admits (*Job and Solomon*, p. 189); so that future punishment, if taught by Sirach, comes on the scenes before future reward becomes a point of faith. The majority of the apocryphal books (Baruch [ii. 17], Judith, Tobit, I. IV. Mac.) are generally held to maintain the same old faith in Sheol. See Gröbler in *Studien u. Kritiken* for 1879: Wünsche in *Jahrbücher für Prot. Theol.* 1880. On the other hand, II. Mac. is Pharisaic, and Wisdom and IV. Mac. contain Alexandrian Platonism.

We must set clearly before our minds the character of the Restoration of Judah under Cyrus as a provisional fulfilment of prophecy. No doubt prophecy was always engaged in interpreting history a little in advance. And therefore it had many a provisional fulfilment. But this really extraordinary event—the revival, however modified, of a characteristic national life—was in a very peculiar sense a confirmation of the prophetic word. Great faith had co-operated with God's great grace in bringing about such an event. All the prophetic ideals now lay before the returning exiles. They had a *tabula rasa* to work upon. Might they not think that Jehovah would introduce among them the full glories of which His prophets had spoken beforehand?

We know how magnificently the second Isaiah characterised the events which he saw impending. And if we may refer the 'accession Psalms' (xlvi., xciii., xcvi.-c.) to the days of the Return, we obtain from them a picture of the high ideal enthusiasm with which Israel entered on its new career. Moreover, the prophets of the Return, Haggai (i. 12, 14), and Zechariah (viii. 6, 12), speak of the 'remnant,' an expression we can hardly do wrong in taking in its technical prophetic sense = the heirs of salvation. Not less characteristic is the way in which Zechariah contrasts his work with that of 'the former prophets' (i. 4; vii. 7). Evidently the earlier prophets were in his opinion a corporation by themselves, whose message was finished. May we not infer that he regarded his own time as the period of the fulfilment of their prophecy? Most curious of all are the allusions of Haggai and Zechariah to Messianic prophecy, in the strict sense of the word. Naturally Zerubbabel, their governor, the prince of the house of David, was a very important personage to these prophets. We cannot, indeed, connect with him, unless by the use of conjectural emendation, Zechariah's prophecies of 'the Branch' (iii. 8; vi. 12; the same word as in Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; = xxxiii. 15, 16). But in chapter iv. the same thing is said of Zerubbabel which is said in vi. of the Messiah—he is to finish building the

temple. And, when Haggai, without using the phrase, projects the day of the Lord again into the future (ii. 6), he connects it (*ib.* 23) with Zerubbabel.

Did they really suppose this inconspicuous man to be the promised Messiah? Or does the variation in Zechariah's tone, as he refers sometimes to the living man at his side, and at other times to the ideal figure of prophecy,—does this imply that they only played with Zerubbabel's name as a type of some greater one? Or did they regard him as a possible Messiah? We lose sight of him, and with him the idea of the royal Messiah as a practical factor in religious life disappears for a long time. Even in Zechariah (i.-viii.) we are struck with the great importance of the High Priesthood. For the rest, while Haggai's eschatology postulates a day of the Lord, Zechariah's postulates no more than peace and plenty, and great moral influence for the new Israel (ch. viii.).

The historical books of the next century transport us to an atmosphere of the driest prose. They made, it is true, a covenant with God, but not that new covenant of which Jeremiah had spoken. We have to suppose, then, a lapse of time, during which the old ideals of prophecy gradually moved into the still remote future. Thus Malachi names again as future the 'day of the Lord,' the 'great and terrible' day. That it may be safely endured by God's people, Malachi, one of the latest prophetic voices, postulates a return of Elijah, or a prophet working in his spirit and power. And Joel, if we are right in putting him here—would any early prophet have developed a lurid scheme of eschatology in connection with a plague of locusts?—Joel prefixes to the 'great and terrible day of the Lord' not merely a prophet, but an outpouring of the prophetic spirit. In other words, he looks to the future for Jeremiah's new Covenant. If the end of the Book of Zechariah belongs to this period, it gives us a large redaction of the old prophetic hopes, including the personal Messiah (ix. 9; also xiii. 7?), but not including personal resurrection.

That feature reappears in the Book of Daniel, which it is impossible not to refer to the Maccabean struggle. In it the personal Messiah, probably, does not appear, vii. 13 being most likely a personification of Israel. But resurrection does appear, and is extended (xii. 2) to some among the wicked. Probably it seemed to the prophet that, if God's judgment was to be vindicated before all flesh, it was impossible that dead traitors, among Israel, should escape Him; they must therefore be summoned back to life to meet their doom.

Our general result is therefore this, that twice, and twice only, the prophetic eschatologies cross the line of the supernatural, and postulate a personal resurrection of [some among] the dead. The idea occurs elsewhere, metaphorically, of Israel as a whole, in earlier prophets, as we have already seen; ¹ personally, as a hope or as a possibility, in Job xiv. 14; Ps. lxxxviii. 10-12; but nowhere as a doctrine, or as an assured certainty. Its first formulating, in Isa. xxvi., seemed to have no immediate effect on men's beliefs. Perhaps the entirely un-supernatural (provisional) fulfilment of prophecy at the Return from captivity seemed to empty the prophet's glowing words of their literal meaning. The Book of Daniel was more fortunate. It continued to prove highly influential even after the Maccabean age. It proved the first and best of a whole series of apocalyptic books (Enoch, Ap. Baruch, ² iv. Esdras, ² etc.). And although no other of these books obtained the honour of the Canon, or was in a position to exert the wide and deep influence which the Book of Daniel exerted, yet the school from which they proceeded helped to spread a belief in resurrection, and to prepare the way for the revelations of the New Covenant. Great indeed is the change in popular beliefs which we encounter on the pages of the New Testament.

B. We now pass on to the individual postulate of immortality, as the second part of the direct progress made by the

¹ P. 190.

² Post-Christian.

Old Testament religion in dealing with the doctrines of the future life.

This postulate we understand as being made by souls who had been led along the line of moral and spiritual piety to a peculiarly intimate personal fellowship with God. To some of these, after a certain time, it became evident (in the glow of feeling, if not in the colder light of logic), that 'neither death, nor life, nor any other creature, should be able to separate them from the love of God.' This inward and personal experience gave weight to the prophetic doctrine of a resurrection for the just. As springing out of faith in God, we reckon this postulate to the direct progress made by Old Testament piety. When we come in our next chapter to study the function of doubt in the Old Testament religion, we shall see that a different kind of progress was concurrently made, and that a different class of considerations came to tell on men in leading them to postulate rewards and punishments in a future life. But, at present, we are to deal with the pure religious essence of the soul's trust in God. We are to watch it rising up from earthly experiences of God's grace to the assurance of fuller satisfaction elsewhere.

There are only four Psalms in which we are reasonably well assured that this is the writer's state of mind. The Psalms are xvi., xvii., xlix., lxxiii. It would be very difficult to assign a fixed date to any of them.

Let us begin with Ps. xvi. The writer lives in an age when the idolatrous worship of foreign gods is popular—when the 'pious' are a conspicuous and probably a persecuted few. The writer declares, in the strongest terms, his adherence to Jehovah and to the people of Jehovah. He expresses his contentment and joy in his faith; as the theme expands he rises to a higher eloquence, till he utters as the last and best thought this, that death cannot touch his communion with God. 'Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thy pious one to see corruption.' In its very nature his life of communion with God excludes death; his 'soul, and

body, and spirit,' must equally (ver. 9) and enduringly prosper by God's goodness. The psalm expresses an ideal which experience fails to verify. It expresses 'the perfect faith of an imperfect man.' At other times the singer may have been reduced to groping his way blindly through difficulties over which he now soars in his heavenward flight, singing as he goes. But the ideal in itself is valid. It may have been accepted by his readers as a prediction; or it may have stimulated them to high hopes, if not to absolute assurance, in their own moments of soaring faith. And eventually, in Jesus Christ, 'life and incorruption' are 'brought to light' for all.¹

In Ps. xvii. the hope of immortality is expressed in the last verse (15). The Psalmist cries to God in trouble, depicting the power, the urgency, the prosperity of his enemies. But he does not envy them their treasures, if he can have God for his treasure; nay, he does not envy them life itself, with all that life can offer, with the joys of fatherhood and of hereditary name and influence. 'Let me behold Thy face in righteousness; let me be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness!' No doubt the interpretation of this Psalm is contested more strongly and more plausibly than the interpretation of Ps. xvi. But, unless we belittle our Psalmist's faith, we must make him mean something more than that he hopes to be satisfied 'every morning' (cf. cxxxix. 18). It is life itself which he renounces that he may win God. There might be difficulty in supposing that he meant 'awaking' on the resurrection morning; but Canon Cheyne finely solves our difficulty by suggesting that, to this writer, not only is life a dream—as Ps. xc. 5 suggests—but *death the awaking*—'an image which mystics in all ages have claimed as their own.' This again, then, is an isolated hope. Who can tell how many or how few were able to share it?

Our third passage occurs in Ps. xlix. The author here precludes with unusual elaboration. He tells us that he has a mystery to expound. What is this mystery? Not indeed the

¹ Compare a paper by Professor W. R. Smith in *Expositor* for 1876.

immortality of the righteous—so it has been rightly observed. Is it not *the mortality of the wicked*? Here again the world is regarded as being altogether on the side of bad rich men. They have ‘gained the whole world’; but then they can ‘give nothing in exchange for their souls.’ They lose themselves. That vision of the vanity and emptiness of life, which came with heartbreaking power to the singer of Ps. xxxix., comes with comfort to the indignant brooding spirit of the present Psalmist. They do not long play their insolent game! Death comes to execute judgment upon them. ‘Man in splendour hath no continuance; he is become as the beasts that are cut off. This is the fortune of those who have self-confidence, and of those who after them applaud their speech’ (ver. 13, 14 [12, 13], Cheyne). ‘Death is their shepherd, and their form shall waste away; Sheol shall be their castle for ever’ (ver. 15 [14]). Such is the writer’s message—his parable—his theodicy. Cold comfort we may think it; it would have been meaningless had it stood alone. For all men die, and that speedily. But, though the writer’s mystic message refers to the mortality of sinners, not to the immortality of saints, yet there is—antedecently to the revelation which he now communicates—a bright background of hope already established in his mind. ‘But God shall redeem my soul from the power of Sheol; for he shall receive me’ (ver. 15, cf. lxxxix. 48). Apart from this hope, the theodicy of the Psalm would have been pointless. Whence comes this hope? We can hardly fail to trace an allusion in it to the legend of Enoch, who ‘walked with God, and was not, for God took him’ (Gen. v. 24). That ancient story is seen to be at work, suggesting truths, confirming hopes, to the doubting minds of tried but faithful Israelites. When critics sought to exclude a reference to Enoch’s translation, there is no want of fairness, I think, in assuming that they were unduly swayed by their own prepossessions. In the further course of criticism, the Psalms generally, as well as the priestly Elohist document in the Pentateuch, have been brought to so low a date, that the ‘household of criticism’

need not hesitate to allow that the Psalmist quotes the historian. The interpretation 'God shall keep me alive in time of danger, for he shall succour me,' is *banal*: and it altogether upsets the line of thought pursued throughout the Psalm.

Here then we have announced, as a revelation from heaven, an explicit doctrine of conditional immortality. It is a very different doctrine from Mr. Edward White's. The fate of the wicked is not resurrection followed by annihilation or dissolution of the soul-substance; their fate is simply to abide in Sheol. And, in the further course of revelation, this Psalmist's message, in spite of its partial truth, passes out of date, and is merged in clearer and fuller revelations. From this we learn that not even an authentic message from heaven need contain the whole truth, or truth unmixed with error. But what, it may be asked, are we to understand by the upright 'having dominion over' the wicked '*in the morning*'? Most likely the writer refers to 'the morning' of some great coming public deliverance and time of the manifesting of God's righteous judgments. If he should refer to a resurrection morning, he would imply that the wicked in the half-existence of Sheol were conscious that they had lost the day, and that God had vindicated the cause of the righteous.

Finally, we have a repetition of the same phrase in Ps. lxxiii. 24. While our passages, as we have arranged them, seem to gain, upon the whole, in the clearness of their religious vision, they vary in a contrary direction in respect to the speculative problem. Ps. lxxiii. has to do with the problem of the Wisdom literature—why does God suffer the wicked to flourish? (ver. 3), and its solution is, the wicked die suddenly and unhappily at the last (ver. 18 *sq.* It is almost certain that the text must be amended in ver. 4). An insufficient solution truly! That of Ps. xlix. has much more solidity; and the intense joy in God of Ps. xvi., xvii., indicates a deeper security against doubt than either of the longer Psalms discloses. Our Psalmist, in Ps. lxxiii., has something of this joy, but it fluctuates. And what makes his words intensely interesting to a

modern reader is our sympathy with both his phases—with the shadow of doubt no less than with the sunshine of faith. The intellectual theory in which he found a momentary holding-ground neither profits us nor interests us. But the picture of a strong soul, tossed with tempest and again at rest—missing his hold of the truth for a little, and then again feeling with ecstasy the vital pulsations of God's loving heart—the shame of the man, his self-abasement, his recovery, his rapture—all that is as true as truth, as vital as human nature itself, as Divine as the spirit of Jesus Christ. There are those who have never cared enough for the assurance of faith to understand what troubled the Psalmist; and there are those who have never had their faith clouded with the suspicion of a doubt. It is not for them that deep calls to deep here. But when others find their feet 'almost gone,' it is much to know that human brothers have lost their way before us in this labyrinth of life, and that they have found their way again at the last—that they have missed God, and let the loss pain them, and that God has shown them Himself in clearer light. There is many a palliative for the disease of doubt in this Book of Psalms, where we hear what the Spirit of God has wrung out from the spirit of man. All this an empty dream? wasted emotion? It is morally incredible!

On one view we ought to add Ps. xxiii. to our list of passages where Old Testament piety is strong enough to postulate personal immortality. The question turns on the interpretation of a phrase in ver. 4, rendered in our version 'the valley of the shadow of death,' in Rev. Ver. margin, 'valley of deep darkness,' by Cheyne, 'valley of Hades gloom.' Cheyne, in the Parchment Library Psalms, understood the Psalmist to express his confidence even in death, referring to Job xxxviii. 17 for a parallel use of 'deep darkness' as a personification of death. If this were the author's meaning, he must have the hope of immortality to cheer him. Though the Psalms and the Old Testament generally have the blackest view of what death is—though they think its dark doom inevitable—they are never resigned

to it; they never try to learn resignation from their religious faith. Resignation to the doom of extinction is a morbid modernism, the child of disbelief. The unbelief of ignorance and immaturity, in the Old Testament, is very different from the unbelief of despair, such as we sometimes meet nowadays. But the tone of ver. 6 seems to exclude the idea that the Psalmist extended his view beyond this present life. And in his new volume Canon Cheyne accepts the common view of 'Hades gloom,' though he gives as an alternative rendering, that the dark valley *leading to Sheol* will be cheered for the dying saint by God's presence—not, I think, a very probable interpretation.

Also I might be expected to introduce here Job xix. 25-27. But it appears on the whole probable that the hope of personal immortality is not contained in this celebrated passage—the hope of resurrection, glanced at in xiv. 13, 14, only to be laid aside in despair, is almost out of the question here. The only reason I shall venture to give for rejecting the higher interpretation of Job's great appeal is, that nothing in the previous part of the poem leads up to it, and that nothing in the subsequent part of the poem refers back to it. Further reasons for or against any view must be drawn from minute grammatical study of the passage. An interpretation of Job's hope, confining it to the certain vindication of his righteousness in after days on the earth by God, whom his faith already 'sees,' may be found in Schultz's *Alttestamentliche Theologie* or in Cheyne's *Job and Solomon*. In the latter book the German rendering of Bickell's corrected text is quoted. If Bickell's corrections are right, then the question is at an end; there is no mention of immortality in the passage. And the passage is confessedly one where emendation to some extent is almost unavoidable.

We find then that there are not many passages in the Old Testament where faith in God becomes strong enough to assert, out of its own heart, the assurance of eternal life in God's presence. But some such passages there are, beyond all reasonable doubt. We must not think that the assertion of

such great hopes by one saint of God implied their acceptance by all other saints. We must not even think that the man, who one day saw heaven clearly open before him, spent all the days of his life on the same high level of assurance. We are dealing with a subjective hope, the child of religious experience ; we are not dealing with a dogma. Prophecy and apocalyptic came in before the hope of immortality attained definite dogmatic limits. But the experience handed down by the Psalmists, as we may suppose, gave wings to the dogma, once it was established, or, to vary our figure, breathed into its dull clay something of the breath of life. And, finally, the hope of immortality was again recast by Christ, in His person, His teaching, His death, resurrection, and ascension.

IV.

The first point upon which doubt challenges, and successfully challenges, the traditional religious teaching of the Old Testament is in the matter of that family solidarity which the Second Commandment implies both in its promise and in its threat. We must understand that, in an early age, when men's ideas of moral personality and of the sacredness of the individual were incomplete, it seemed fitting that not only prosperity and distress, but guilt and righteousness should be shared among men, nation by nation, clan by clan, family by family. And this mood of mind may have lasted for a long time in certain quarters. Many of the Bible historians take pleasure in recording traditions which imply that God executed judgment in this fashion,—causing not only Achan to be put to death, but Achan's family,—or killing by miracles not Dathan and Abiram only, but 'their wives and little ones.' We cannot infer from this that the traditions in question received their present form at a very early date. The archaic theory of God's justice may very likely have lingered on as the traditional legal view, in some quarters, although elsewhere, among the prophets, the moral view was being modernised. Our first symptom of moral development in regard to this matter is found in the history of

the reign of king Amaziah, who, we are told, though he executed justice on the conspirators who had murdered his father, 'put not to death' their children, 'according to that which is written in the book of the law of Moses' (2 Kings xiv. 6; cf. Deut. xxiv. 16). It is maintained by criticism, that Deuteronomy is later than the time of Amaziah. But there is no reason for doubting the historical accuracy of this tribute to a king, who does not escape, in other points, the usual blame of neglecting to suppress worship in 'the high places.' His behaviour marks a conspicuous advance in moral civilisation; it betrays the earlier working, as we may suppose, of that growing sense of justice which subsequently received authoritative approval in the verse which we have already quoted from Deuteronomy. And, from the time that kings could act so, and subjects take notice of their behaviour, it would be growingly difficult to maintain the old hard and fast rule, that mankind must be judged in the mass. When the Deuteronomist's protest is added to this growing popular discontent, we recognise that the days of the old belief are numbered.

The further history of this individualist protest is connected with the period of national disintegration just before the exile. Cheyne suggests, with much probability, that Josiah may have undertaken his disastrous expedition against the Pharaoh in the consciousness of having faithfully carried through the Deuteronomic reform, and of having thus, as he may have supposed, earned a right to God's protection while he was fighting Israel's battles and defending Israel's territory.¹ If so, we can see what a very great spiritual crisis Josiah's defeat and death constituted; we can understand that, for the moment, prophetic religion would be terribly discredited among the masses of the people; we can understand that the Wisdom problem would spring into life,—the problem, how the wicked could prosper, and how the righteous (viz. here—and often—law-abiding Israel) could suffer. One possible explanation of

¹ *Jeremiah: his Life and Times*, p. 93. Dr. Cheyne inclines to think that Habakkuk retains very much this point of view, *ib.* p. 134.

the people's suffering was that God was punishing them for the disobedience of past generations,—‘visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.’ This theory seems to have been generally adopted in some quarters, and expressed in the sneering proverb—for now, at any rate, the proverb was used to give point to a sneering criticism of God's providence—‘the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.’ Of course the great prophets of the day did not for a moment admit the truth of this theory. Jeremiah and Ezekiel found sin enough in their contemporaries to account for the Divine severity, without reckoning in those offences of earlier generations, which the Israelites of their own day were appropriating and ‘filling up.’ Jeremiah and Ezekiel could appeal to the consciences of their contemporaries, undeterred by sneers. Nevertheless it was desirable to meet the criticism, however cynical it might be, and however bad the men might be who urged it. For the criticism implied that society was outgrowing its inherited moral standards. Such a time is always a time of danger—not least when the critics of traditional morality are themselves bad men, who care for no morality. Hence the prophetic religion had to recast men's moral theories. It had authoritatively to abrogate the view, that punishment is hereditary.

Jeremiah does his part of this task in his great prophecy of comfort. It is in the picture of the future golden age that he inserts the Deuteronomic principle that ‘Every one shall die for his own iniquity’ (xxxii. 20). In that time of spiritual and social regeneration, he affirms, the people's proverb will lose its force. ‘*In those days* they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.’ But, if Jeremiah affirms this principle as part of a future Divine administration, Deuteronomy had already introduced it as part of a present human administration.

Ezekiel goes further than Jeremiah. Indeed, that religious individualism, which is to a large extent latent in Jeremiah,—which is constituted by the circumstances of his lot, but which

is not, by him, translated into a theory,—comes to the front in Ezekiel, and is pushed perhaps to an extreme. Jeremiah was a conspicuous sufferer for righteousness' sake. He was well-nigh a solitary sufferer. The current ran against him; a more ostensibly patriotic policy was the popular policy; men could only keep on the side of Jehovah and of His 'servant' by separating from the mass, and making themselves conspicuous in isolation. All this lies at the root of Ezekiel's religious theories. Jeremiah, for instance, had said, 'Thus said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people; cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth' (xv. 1). When Ezekiel reproduces this doctrine of despair, he elaborates it further; 'though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in' the land, 'they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God;' 'they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.' This is repeated some three times (xiv. 14, 16, 18, 20). Here the announcement of the land's irreparable fate is closely mixed up with the announcement of an individualist morality. The same thing appears in Ezekiel's account of his personal responsibility as a prophet (iii. *et seq.* xxxiii.). It is a relief to him, as it could hardly have been, perhaps, to an earlier prophet, to make sure of 'delivering his soul,' while the house of Israel crashes in ruins beside him. And more; he is conscious of being despatched by God to deal with the souls of individuals, while his predecessors had dwelt almost entirely on their mission to the nation, as such, or to its rulers. Finally, when Ezekiel recurs to the popular proverb, which Jeremiah had abrogated, so to say, *for the Messianic age*, Ezekiel abrogates it off-hand. He does not, any more than Jeremiah, deny that the proverb may correctly represent some of God's past dealings with men. But he asserts it shall no longer do so,—that is the form in which the revelation of the sacredness of the individual soul is made by God through Ezekiel. 'As I live, saith the Lord God, ye *shall not have occasion any more* to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all

souls are mine ; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine ; the soul that sinneth, *it shall die*' (xviii. 3, 4, etc.). The doctrines of subjective morality, personal responsibility, the sacredness of human personality, appear in this chapter full-grown ; and the prophet betrays a noble enthusiasm for that Divine righteousness which he is vindicating. His doctrines appear indeed in a paradoxical form. He says nothing of immortality, nothing of resurrection ; it is in the earthly life that he looks to see God's justice manifested. Truth is revealed one portion at a time ; and Ezekiel's part was to develop the moral consciousness in the direction of subjective morality. He says nothing of that wider social life in which alone men can find their true salvation ; social religion was in ruins around him, and Providence used him to develop the doctrines, not of social, but of personal moral life. Finally, we must note the impracticability of Ezekiel's doctrines in the form in which he announces them. They amount to a prophetic programme of God's providential government, in which God is pledged to kill on the spot every sinner who is guilty of mortal sin. Death does not mean eternal punishment in this chapter ; nor does it mean annihilation, or dissipation of the soul-substance. Death means death. Yet the prophet tells us that sinners [not guilty of mortal sin?] are to be allowed opportunity of repentance, and, if they repent, shall live in God's favour as though they had never forfeited it.—Experience fails to bear out the prophet's postulates. If God had instituted such a nursery-discipline in Israel—had there been no more trial or triumph of faith—revelation would have been cut short, and moral growth arrested. Ultimately, Ezekiel's doctrines must be blended with the doctrine of immortality and the Christian doctrine of patience under suffering. In order to blend with these other doctrines, his own doctrines must be modified. But they are announced by themselves, in their actual paradoxical shape, in order that they may be driven more securely home into men's minds. Subjective morality is an element in the ultimate moral synthesis. It is a contribution towards the future—yet

already somehow present—kingdom of God. From Ezekiel's day, the *punishment* of children for their father's sins can never be anything but a piece of rhetoric. Though Ezekiel may not have been all round a great man, he did the special bit of work given him to do.

One, who imbibed his first conceptions of Old Testament theology before the Wellhausen theory obtained that wide acceptance which it now enjoys, finds it difficult to conceive that the evolution of the individual (so to call it) in the Book of Ezekiel precedes the mass of the manifestations of personal piety in the Book of Psalms. Still more does such a one find it difficult to suppose that the storm of doubt, whose groundswell we can still plainly discern in Ezek. xviii., absolutely subsided, and that such entirely *naïf* statements of the theory of the Hebrew wisdom as are found, *e.g.*, in Ps. i. or Ps. xxxvii. were produced after men's minds had been shaken to their foundations by the Exile. I suppose the reply of critics would be, that times of security and of popular prosperity estranged men from the questioning mood, even after it had held possession of their fathers for a season. And I suppose the critics would point out that the theory placidly propounded in Ps. i. as self-evident is the same theory which is reached by Ezekiel through struggle and storm. They will tell us that speculative questions affecting the individual could only emerge subsequently to the work of the prophet who first disentangled the individual from the race, and gave him his due place as a moral whole, a being of infinite value.

(2) Where the second Isaiah touches on the *sufferings* of the servant of the Lord, he encounters the same problem which engaged Ezekiel. The servant is 'righteous'; why is he in grief? How can he suffer? In other words, the godly kernel of Israel suffers worse than their heedless neighbours; why does God appoint this to them, or (so perhaps the prophet may have asked) to that greater 'Servant' whom godly suffering Israel typifies? Ezekiel's answer was to assert passionately that no man should henceforth suffer for another,

or profit another: 'the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.' Deutero-Isaiah's answer is, 'His soul shall make an offering for sin'; 'by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities' (liii. 10, 11). Righteousness must suffer with the sinful, on behalf of the sinful, if it is to help the sinful and wretched. It is the deepest word ever spoken in regard to suffering.

(3) The Book of Job is referred to the period of the Exile by such scholars as Cheyne and Dr. A. B. Davidson. Later than the Exile it cannot well be, owing to its evident influence on Zech. iii. The scholars I have named think that Job stands for suffering Israel. And, if Dr. Cheyne's view of Josiah's death be well founded, we can understand how deeply the faith of Israel must have been tried by such disastrous reverses at a time when, as it seemed, Israel was faithful to the Covenant. At the same time, if this view of the Book of Job be correct, the book may imply less mental preoccupation with the problems of the *individual's* rewards or sufferings than we find in some of the Wisdom Psalms. Supposing it to refer to the same circumstances which form the basis of the revelations contained in second Isaiah, we shall find it curious to mark the contrast between the prophetic thinker and the wise man. The prophet individualises his subject as far as possible; the sage generalises it as far as possible. The 'servant' in second Isaiah is in intimate moral fellowship with those through whom, and for whom, he suffers. The patriarch in the drama is visited by a series of unrelieved natural calamities. Both books are opposed to the *naïf* belief that prosperity and adversity always occur in this world in correspondence with man's moral deservings. The scheme of the Book of Job is the emphatic contradiction of the popular faith. The best man of his day is the prince of sufferers—that is its paradox. But, while the prophet teaches that the suffering of innocence benefits the guilty, the sage's more abstract conception of the problem precludes that solution. His prologue suggests to us one solution—that men are

part of a larger spiritual economy, which influences their fortunes in inscrutable ways. The discourses generally, and the Elihu discourses in particular, suggest another helpful thought (found also in Prov. i.-ix.)—that affliction is a paternal chastisement. The speeches of Job hint, at any rate, at compensation for the righteous in a future life. The appearance of Jehovah impresses on our minds the lesson that God is ‘transcendent’ or unsearchable¹ in His methods, though knowable, and worthy of love and trust, in His nature. Finally, the epilogue suggests St. James’s inference, that ‘the end of the Lord’ proves Him to be ‘full of pity, and merciful.’ In fact, whether the Book of Job comes early or late in the chronology of the Old Testament wisdom, it is a singularly mature discussion of its dark and burdensome problem, and suggests—at least in the form in which it now lies before us—almost every point of consolation or of explanation which the Gospel of Christ is able to affirm. In the difference between suggestion and assurance there lies, of course, a great gulf. We shall do well to give thanks both for the certainties of the New Covenant and for those earlier hints which paved the way for them. It is one of the drawbacks of the imaginative method of treating speculative truths, that we are left uncertain which suggestion the author (or authors) wished us to lay most stress on. That is the *quid pro quo* which the poetical form costs; that is the vindication of abstract science, of dry ‘dogma,’ in comparison with the more attractive graces of ‘literature.’ But probably the writer who felt impelled to this impersonal utterance was too truly objective to desire to be a propagandist. Probably he felt he had done his work if new thoughts were sown in men’s minds, and were left to ripen as the Lord of the harvest, and not as the sower, might choose.

(4) Before passing on to the rest of the Wisdom literature—and to what most concern us, the Wisdom Psalms—it may be well to insert a few remarks on this form of Old Testament literature.

¹ Somewhat one-sidedly put in an able paper by the author of *Mark Rutherford*, in the volume entitled *Mark Rutherford’s Deliverance*.

The great prophets of Israel and Judah were almost exclusively public teachers, striving to secure the doing of God's true will in the national policy. For religion as then conceived was an affair of the nation, not of the individual. But no community can dispense with rules for individual life, however little relative importance it may attach to the individual as such. And proverbial wisdom offered itself as a familiar form of teaching to the adherents of the higher conception of Israel's faith. Hence—if, as seems likely, we may assign most or all of the Book of Proverbs to the pre-Exile period—the Wisdom proved a somewhat humble coadjutor to the spirit of prophecy. The advice given in the Wisdom books is healthy, moderate, practicable. Personal religion, as described in Proverbs, does not soar into the abyss; but it does not stumble into the mire. Prophecy is apparently recognised (xxix. 18), and the priestly system as well (iii. 9), but the Wise echo the prophetic doctrine of the comparative unimportance of sacrifice (xxi. 3). Motives for doing right are chiefly drawn from the certainty of retribution *in this life* (xi. 21, 31, xx. 7). A future life does not appear in the Book of Proverbs, unless in one or two more than doubtful passages (x. 25, xi. 4, xii. 28, xiv. 32, xxiii. 18—given by Cheyne). The theory of retribution is clearly laid down—nowhere more clearly than in Proverbs i.-ix. This portion of the book—not the earliest, at any rate—soars high enough in its picture of Divine Wisdom. But human wisdom, though now revealed as a sort of fellowship with God, still has its sphere in earthly life, and its sanctions in the vicissitudes of earth. Nowhere in Proverbs do we find the Second Commandment's doctrine that children are punished for their parents' sins. Without formally combating it, the Wise men instinctively turn away from it,¹ although they still retain promises for the seed of the righteous (xi. 21, xx. 7). Wisdom was thus

¹ The doctrine is mentioned in Job, where it is rejected, not as unjust to the children, but as failing to secure due punishment of the criminal himself (xxi. 19). Cf. also Ps. xxxvii. 28.

originally very practical. But, in spite of itself, it could not attain to such an abstraction as the personification of Wisdom in Prov. viii. without committing itself to a speculative theory of God's ways. And this speculative theory comes to coincide almost entirely with the natural religion of the eighteenth century. The prerogatives and the duties of Israel are prophetic truths. Not even Messianic hope, in any of its forms, touches the wise men. Accordingly, they present the Old Testament doctrine of retribution even more baldly than other parts of the Old Testament present it. Bad men suffer, are suddenly killed (*e.g.* x. 24, xiii. 9); good men live to old age (iii. 16, ix. 11, x. 27, xvi. 31) in peace and prosperity. God may chasten men—*i.e.* He may punish in order to reclaim. This is Eliphaz's doctrine in the Book of Job. But the chastisement is supposed necessarily to imply gross acts of outward sins. The speculative development of Old Testament wisdom is less a philosophy (as Maurice and others have called it) than an apologetic. It is a theodicy—applying *a priori* principles to the details of human life—confident that it will justify God's ways to men. When Deuteronomy became the people's covenant law, and God (as they supposed) was solemnly pledged to judge Israel according to its works, the idea of retribution seemed guaranteed against all risk of failure. They must be able to explain all God's dealings with them by means of this clue.

But they failed. Their truth was only a half truth; and God is the unwearied enemy of half truths, because God is true, and loves truth as a whole. Therefore Josiah fell in battle against the invader; and therefore both Habakkuk (i. 3) and Jeremiah (xii. 1) have to complain that the conquering tyrant is befriended by Jehovah. And, although Ezekiel gave a clearer statement than ever to the theory of individual retribution, the unknown author or authors of Job tore it into tatters. Yet this did not make an end of the theory. The history of Israel passes through many periods of prosperity and adversity, of religious and social expansion, of religious

and social decay ; and fundamentally the same theodicy lived down into Judaism. Hence we need not be surprised if the finding of criticism should ultimately throw the most of the Psalms, or the Wisdom Psalms in particular, into the post-Exile period.

Such a Psalm as xxxiv. belongs to the practical wisdom of Israel (ver. 11, 'Ye children'). And very many Psalms—*e.g.* xciv.—state and urge the central doctrine of the Wisdom—the doctrine of retribution. Most objectively, however, the doctrine is stated in i., which is, almost by general consent, a late Psalm, written as an introduction to a collection of Psalms. Here there is no shadow of doubt. The rule is stated ; facts must embody it. And so (though with less confidence) in many Psalms.

But, though this attitude might content men in times of prosperity and good government, difficulties were sure to recur in periods of a different character. Ps. xxxvii. sees that the prosperity of wicked men constitutes a menace to faith, but assures its readers that such prosperity will be short-lived. Ps. lxxiii. is far more deeply stirred, but maintains that the death of bad men, when it comes, will be sudden and disastrous. Ps. xlix. goes further, and affirms that wicked men forfeit their share in the after life to which the pious are to attain. Finally, Ps. xvi. and xvii. announce that outward prosperity is not the real crown of human life ; that a good man in fellowship with God has that which utterly transcends the pleasures of sin, and which is lasting as well.

The above Psalms contain more or less abstract discussion of the problem why facts fail to correspond with religious theory. Elsewhere in the Book of Psalms we meet with a pleading, wailing, indignant practical appeal to God to make the facts answer to the revealed theory. While Prophecy, for the most part, blames the people's sin for thwarting God's purpose, Psalmody for the most part—for the most part—laments over the fact that God fails to respond to the cry, to the effort, to the hopes of His people. 'One of the tasks,'

not only of the Hebrew wisdom, but 'of the old economy, was to drill holes in itself, to begin making breaches along the whole circumference of the material law that bounded it.'¹ Men might be content with a theory of earthly rewards in the time of their health and vigour. But if pestilence or sword overtook them—if death threatened—must not their religious theory break down, and with it their religious life? We have already seen² what a conspicuous part the fear of premature death plays in Hebrew psalmody. It is perhaps significant that laments over the premature death of friends are nowhere to be found in the Psalter. It may or may not be true that death seems less terrible to his victim in old age. Perhaps the instinctive clinging to life really relaxes; perhaps that is one of the unsympathetic illusions of youth and health. But, at any rate, bereavement in the necessary course of nature is far less terrible to the survivors than the loss of friends in their youth. That brings with it instinctive revulsion; that shakes the moral nature to its depths, and rends the heart's fibres. But, while the Old Testament preserves David's lament over Saul and Jonathan, and while Ezekiel's book gives us a glimpse of the agony of his widowhood, the Psalter never touches on these themes. It has no strain like the Christian hymn, 'When our heads are bowed with woe,' or 'Wake, awake, for night is flying.' Did the uncertainty which hung over the future life—the penal conception attached to premature death—make men dumb towards God in their bereavement? Or is the personal relation which fills the emotional life of the Psalter too jealous to admit any side-glances into the private trials and sufferings of men? Must the dialogue between Jehovah and His saint be uninterrupted by the shadow of any third personality?

If, however, the vicissitudes of personal life could produce little impression on Hebrew psalmody, the vicissitudes of national life necessarily uttered themselves there. We hear

¹ Dr. A. B. Davidson, 'Wisdom of the Hebrews,' *Expositor*, Dec. 1880, p. 449.

² P. 177.

the demand for reward in evil times—*e.g.* Ps. xxvi., xlv.—a demand made on the score of God's justice, but not passing into a demand for eternal life on behalf of the individual till we come to the literature of Pharisaism. Salvation by works is the kernel of post-Biblical Judaism, but it forms no part of the theology of the Old Testament. Still oftener do we meet with the demand for punishment of the wicked. 'Behold,' says a Hebrew sage, 'the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner?' (Prov. xi. 31.) The idea of a just God was to Old Testament believers an ideal. They grasped at it by faith; they sought to verify it: it constantly eluded them. Once at least—in Ps. lxxxviii.—we hear the accents of absolute despair.

All this was part of the discipline through which God was leading men to fuller revelations both of doctrine and of duty. Christ has the secret both of eternal life and of self-forgetfulness. But God revealed truth through the ministry of life and providence. He wrote it, 'not in tables of stone, but in tables that were hearts of flesh'; not in ink, but in tears and sighs and the heart's blood. To some the revelation may seem less Divine when it is shown to be more human. To others this method of revelation will seem to give an absolute authority and unique sacredness to truth that has been so dearly bought. At any rate, those who are in kindred trouble are not likely to miss the fruit of their forerunners' blood and toil. 'In these characters was written first the charter of our deliverance; these are the characters in which it is renewed.'¹

(5) A side consequence of the painful discipline of Old Testament piety was the retreat of the Wisdom from its bold pretensions. We have no tokens in the Bible of a spirit of theoretical scepticism, and it is doubtful whether that manifestation of sin could find opportunity for itself in Israel. Where atheism is spoken of (Ps. xiv.=liii.), practical atheism is probably meant. But the claim to have a verifiable theory

¹ Hinton, *The Mystery of Pain*.

of the universe is dropped on the part of the Wisdom. Job xxviii.—that calmly eloquent, curiously irrelevant chapter, an insertion probably from another source—teaches that Divine wisdom is undiscoverable, or rather that the law of morality is its only known manifestation. Another fragment—Prov. xxx. 1-4—is taken, both by Ewald and by Cheyne, as an expression of scepticism, with a half-sneering reference to the confident language of such scriptures as Proverbs i.-ix. This weary utterance (ver. 1) is unbalanced by any such practical teaching as that of the comfortable poet of Job xxviii. But, in a fragment, we cannot expect to have everything expressed, and 'Agur the son of Jakeh' may have been substantially orthodox. Finally, the Book of Ecclesiastes re-states the Wisdom doctrine from the point of view of an age dim in faith, and dull with the misery of oppression. Here, too, the only wisdom conceded to man is a practical wisdom, and that not of the highest type—acceptance of the inevitable, moderation in the use (one can hardly say enjoyment) of such pleasures as life affords. But Koheleth is as far as any saint or prophet from intellectual scepticism. It is the overpowering will of God which, like a fate—fixed, inscrutable, overmastering—bears him down to the ground, and makes human effort seem 'vanity.' God's power is as real and ubiquitous as in the warmest thoughts of Hebrew piety. But God personally is remote; and life has lost its hope. This was, no doubt, part of the process that had to be gone through in preparation for Christ. From this dreary piety, undoubting, unrejoicing, unhoping, Christ's incarnation set us free. In the Epistle of James—a very different temperament, certainly, from Koheleth—we have a sort of posthumous utterance of the Hebrew wisdom. But in this Christianised and baptized 'Chochma,' 'the judge standeth before the doors,' and God is 'the Father.' Through all the swift severe teaching of its eminently practical Christianity, there runs a sense that the heavens are not grey or remote—that the heavens are opened, and that the Lord is at hand. Through Ecclesiastes there

runs the opposite sense. Therefore a Christian may be able to make but scanty devotional use of the book. Its significance for us is well expressed (though perhaps a trifle brutally?), in Canon Scott Holland's title, 'Christ or Ecclesiastes.' From that, Christ freed us. And yet, if men relapse into fatalism now, it will not be a fatalism of Koholeth's type; it will have redeeming moral features, survivals of Christian faith; while intellectually it will be colder and grimmer than even the book of the belated Old Testament sage. The only thing that saves his book from being vapid, or even unwholesome, is, perhaps, a certain pungent flavour, as of a book into which a human soul has been distilled—a book to the making of which there has gone the wreck of a human life. His shipwreck may not have been total; his faith struggles on within him; he is one 'saved, yet so as by fire'—saved, yet hardly saved. Had he been able to take his own advice—eat, drink, be prudent, leave mysteries alone, give over fretting at what he could not remedy—then we should not have cared to read him. As it is, the world-weary and the sceptical find in him a congenial note, though not a note of scepticism. And the Christian detects in the man's rebellion, languid though it is, the survival of that spirit of quenchless aspiration which is the distinctive possession of God's saints.

Of course, it is not to be supposed that all Koheleth's contemporaries were as clear-headed or as heavy-hearted as he. Some of them pushed out beyond the old lines of faith, within which he still encamped, and found a comfort in apocalyptic and prophetic hopes, or in doctrines of immortality, which were too slight for his purpose. And, even on the old ground, Jesus Sirach was able to find the satisfaction which a commonplace mind can generally derive from inherited truisms. After Koheleth's day—in all probability—came the Maccabee rising, when, for a moment, faith and patriotism blended again, and in their fusion found a common joy. Nevertheless, nothing was suited to lead brooding minds out of the prison-house of dejection till Christ new-created the

world's religious life, and breathed into men's souls His Holy Spirit.

The point of special value for our argument in the present chapter is this, that the progress of Hebrew faith did not come merely by way of accretion of fresh truths to the truth already known. What was suggested to men by prophets or prophetic psalmists may be so regarded, though even that contribution to men's beliefs took on a peculiar temporary colouring from the circumstances under which it was given. But in the Wisdom, and in the Psalms of the same type, deeper views of truth are gained at the cost of struggle and doubt. They are gained by the dissolution of an old orthodoxy, which the Book of Job expressly discusses, and which it shatters by its powerful criticism. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar represent the old orthodoxy. Job represents innovation; and, as against orthodoxy, innovation is crowned with God's favour. Neither party is free from sin; but orthodox narrowness shows so much the worse of the two that mercy comes to the orthodox only through Job's intercession. In the result, when Christ sums up the Old Testament, and opens the New, doubt is justified, though faith, a deeper faith, is more fully justified. Through doubt, and through the discipline of life in general, men had been prepared for Christ's gift of a better faith and a larger hope.

v.

We are often inclined to wonder at the policy of the Persian conqueror of Babylon, in placing a scion of the House of David at the head of the vassal state of Judah. Knowing as we do the volcanic power which subsequent ages proved the Messianic idea to possess, we are apt to feel surprise that a prudent heathen statesman did not detect danger in Zerubbabel's position. But we must remember that the Messianic idea, as presented by the prophets, had no peculiarly martial associations. Sennacherib had suffered a severe check at Jehovah's

hands; but there was no human agent concerned in that mysterious stroke; and Isaiah, who foretold it, did not mention the Messiah in connection with it, although he was the greatest of all the Messianic prophets. Micah mentions the Messiah as a warrior, but as a defensive warrior—not as a conqueror. If Zech. ix. 9 is pre-Exilic, it had given a still more peaceful picture of the promised king. Probably the Book of Psalms is responsible (ii. cx.) for developing a more martial conception of the Messiah, whether by direct prediction or by idealising treatment of living rulers. If the Psalms referred to are directly predictive and directly Messianic, they are probably post-Exilic. At any rate there was nothing to alarm the Persians, or to suggest suspicion regarding Zerubbabel, when, in the scornful confidence of strength, they picked him as the most suitable and popular appointment they could make. The higher prophecy, as they may have known, had never been patriotic in any vulgar sense; Jeremiah and Ezekiel, it may have been remembered, counselled submission to Babylon; and the predictions of the Great Unknown (Isa. xl.-lxvi.) may have been reported to Cyrus, and may have influenced him favourably.

In truth, so long as the Jewish authorities were on terms of amity with their heathen overlords, the political conditions were wanting under which, either for good or for bad, the Messianic idea could become a power in the mind of the nation. For King Messiah could not possibly be vassal to any foreign ruler. How then could King Messiah come in the days of Cyrus, who had been hailed in prophecy as 'Jehovah's anointed'—even as Nebuchadnezzar had been styled by Jeremiah 'Jehovah's servant'? Whatever Haggai and Zechariah meant, their reminiscences of Messianic predictions could have little present meaning. One is tempted to think that Zerubbabel was a weak character, history seems to bear so little trace of him. But it may be, as Ewald¹ supposes, that he fell out of favour, and that his recall initiated the period of depres-

¹ *History of Israel*, tr. v. pp. 106, 120.

sion for Judah, from which Ezra and Nehemiah ultimately brought at least a partial deliverance.

When Zerubbabel disappears, Messianic prophecy strictly so called disappears also. It may be that Psalms lxxxix. and cxxxii. are subsequent to this. But if so, they must be regarded as ideal creations, not supported by any actual circumstances in their writer's age. It may be that Zech. ix.-xi. is a late work; but if so, its doctrine of the Messiah is even more purely academic. The actual currents of religious and national life flowed in other channels, where they did not threaten to disturb existing social arrangements. Accordingly, when Ewald tells us that 'the fundamental Messianic conception' was 'most profoundly and irrevocably'¹ to determine all the subsequent history, we respectfully but firmly decline to believe him. That is one of the strange ghostlike generalisations, hovering as it were over the concrete world of facts, into which Ewald loves to concentrate the meaning of a period. Of such ghostlike essences, or imagined spiritual tendencies, their showman—if I may so call him—is not infrequently the owner and maker. Here the generalisation is connected with Ewald's very improbable date for the Psalter of Solomon, and with his quasi-Deistic tendency to emphasise Jewish doctrines of a pre-existing Messiah to the disparagement of the real Christian doctrine of the Divine Messiah. So far from its being true that the post-Exile period is dominated by the Messianic impulse, we must maintain that, for the greater part of the period, the Messianic idea was precluded from working by the circumstance, already adverted to, of friendly feeling towards the heathen empires in which Judæa was incorporated. And we have further to observe, that all the peculiar characteristics of Hebrew nationality and religion were once again exposed to the greatest danger, out of which, to speak humanly, it was almost by accident that the Maccabean revolt came in time to save them. By human reckoning it was almost a chance that Israel's memories and Israel's faith had not perished under the fascination of Greek culture.

¹ *History of Israel*, tr. v. p. 67.

The high-priest was a more important personage in the restored theocracy than any secular king could be. We notice this already in Haggai and Zechariah; and Ezra's reforms must have strengthened the pre-eminence of the 'spiritual' official. Unfortunately the position was too much for the spirituality of the spiritual officer. All the subsequent history testifies to this—that the high-priest's party invariably drifted into secularity. For this reason, among others, spiritual influence did not abide with the priest. Although he had got rid of the prophet, the priest had a new rival to fear—the scribe. Already Ezra himself is scribe as well as priest. The post-Exile period is pregnant not, I think, with the Christian Messiah, but with the Talmud. Scribism is the ruling religious influence; it practically creates, in the post-Maccabean period, the Pharisee party—the dominant party among the people during our Lord's ministry. And nothing is more remarkable than the ease with which Judaism survived the loss of the temple. The net result of the Pentateuchal code, when carried into practice, was to render sacrifice a superfluity, and to pave the way for the doctrine of self-salvation by means of good works.

The Greek conquests saw the relations of amity between the Jews and their foreign masters undisturbed. We may not be able to accept Josephus's romantic account of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem; but many facts combine to show that the Jews were more inclined to welcome the conqueror as a deliverer than to resent his conquests. In his great foundation at Alexandria, Jews seem from the first to have enjoyed special favours. Professor Mahaffy conjectures¹ (from Josephus's language) that the Jews, already a widely scattered race, may have furnished guides to Alexander's eastward expedition. Here again, therefore, the Messianic idea had no opportunity to work. A new conqueror had come to the consecrated race, yet he also came as a friend.

Subsequently Judæa was tossed backwards and forwards

¹ *Greek Life and Thought.*

between 'the king of the north' and 'the king of the south,' *i.e.* between the Greek monarchies of Syria and Egypt; but, on the whole, the Greek yoke was not oppressive; or, if it ever was, the little Jewish state was now habituated to subjection. So long as it kept quiet, danger seemed likely to befall Judea less from the violence of Greek rule than from the fascination of Greek life. Theatres, gymnasia, heathen temples, were introduced into the holy land, and even into the holy city. Once again the separate existence of the chosen people was imperilled, not by force, but by religious laxity and social sympathies. Once again a reaction was provoked which, under God, saved the Old Testament and its Messianic hopes.

Antiochus Epiphanes appears to have been a very able man, but liable to outbursts of insane fury. In Egypt he had met with a most mortifying check from the ambassadors of 'various northern kingdoms.' This annoyance, and the subsequent affront of Pompilius Lænas's insolent circle, made Antiochus resolve to play the king in earnest where his authority did extend. Therefore he would wait no longer for the gradual Hellenising of the Jews. Losing his head, he gave orders that the Jewish religion should be violently suppressed, and a Pagan ritual introduced into Jehovah's temple at Jerusalem.

It was not from the ranks of the upper priesthood that effective opposition arose to the king's mad and wicked policy. If Antiochus took his conceptions of the Jewish people from their priestly rulers, we need not wonder that he miscalculated the probabilities of success. But he had to learn that, however the rulers might have fallen, the nation at large was not dead to patriotism and religion. He had to learn that worldly calculations dash themselves in pieces when they violently disregard such ideal forces as conscience, and faith, and the love of country. Resistance to the king's edict broke out at Modin or Modein, 'a little town to the west of Jerusalem.' Matthias the priest refused to offer heathen sacrifice, and killed a Jew who dared in his presence to obey the royal edict

(1 Mac. ii.). Having broken out, resistance soon made way, and gained in strength. Its back-bone was the pious party, who had looked on with dismay for many years at the growing secularity and heathenishness of the nation. Taking perhaps their watchword from ancient Psalms—possibly embodying it in new Psalms of praise and of loyal trust in Jehovah—they styled themselves ‘Hasidhim’ (Ps. xvi. 10, l. 5, etc.; cf. Hosea vi. 6)—in Greek form, ‘Assideans’; a name which some have identified¹ in the name ‘Essenes’; for it is generally believed that the religious or Assidean party at this crisis afterwards developed both into Pharisaism and—under peculiar and obscure influences—into the more schismatic piety of the Essenes. For the moment, religious devotion and martial patriotism were at one, as they had scarcely been since written prophecy began the transformation of Israel. And, better than all, God had come to their help. The fanatical impossible enterprise was crowned with success. Apart from some of the Psalms of misery, are there not Psalms of triumph which demand a Maccabean date—Psalms which imply a situation of blended religious and martial triumph, such as only the Maccabean age realises? (*e.g.* cxviii.)

Even now, the alliance between the patriots and the ‘pious’ did not long continue so close. The legal party wished liberty to obey the law of God; for more than this they did not care. They could not find a religious significance in the struggle for independence as such; a proof that—healthily human and secular as the motives of the Maccabean chiefs may have been—legal piety was inwardly estranged from the Messianic idea; else that idea would have led ‘the pious’ to support, on religious grounds, the war of independence which was being waged on national grounds.

In the course of the struggle for independence, Jonathan the Maccabee, by way of indulgence to the Jews, was invited by the usurper Balas to fill the highest post in the Jewish social system by becoming high-priest. This was highly irre-

¹ But compare against this etymology Lightfoot’s dissertation in his *Colossians*.

gular from a legal point of view, but was supported by the logic of events, and carried with it popular approval. Before this time, the high-priesthood had lost much of its ideal sanctity. The ruler of Judah was now of a new type—a priestly warrior (Ps. cx. ??; cf. 1 Mac. x. 20, xiv. 41). Unhappily, the temptation to secularity which had proved too strong for the Zaddokites proved too strong for the Maccabean high-priests. They also gravitated into secularity, unsympathetic pride, oppressiveness. Nevertheless, the restoration of national and religious autonomy implied the reconstitution of the formal conditions under which it was possible for the Messianic idea to operate. And although, in the first instance, political struggles became a battle between the new parties of Pharisees and Sadducees, popular discontent seems to have felt its way back to the prophetic picture of a Davidic king—with consequences both for Pharisee theology and for the whole world's history.

The Sadducees¹ are believed to have their name from the Zaddokites, the priestly caste who obtained predominance under the Levitical system of Ezra, or, as tradition maintained, from the time of Solomon. The members of the Sadducee party are supposed to have been not all the priests, but the higher, richer, more prosperous priests. Their theology represented that secular tendency which proved too strong a temptation, first in the case of the 'Zaddokites' themselves, then in the case of their Maccabean successors. Aristocratic coldness and religious indifference were their distinguishing qualities. But these aristocrats were priests; and their nation was a hagiocracy. Hence their religious indifference could only take the form of a high and dry theological conservatism. Formally and nominally, like all post-Exilic Jews, they were orthodox believers. But they set themselves against such new developments of belief as immortality or resurrection. And, though they necessarily had scribes of their party to defend its views in argument, they were not interested in scribism as the Pharisees

¹ I have drawn here chiefly from Sieffert's articles in Herzog.

were, who could spin out as many new definitions, new dogmas, new duties, as their ingenuity could devise,—the more the better.

The Pharisees are often described as the popular party. But by that can only be meant that they were the people's favourites. People and Pharisees were very different magnitudes. 'This people who knoweth not the law' (John vii. 49) could never be Pharisees. An '*am ha 'aretz*,¹ as Archdeacon Farrar has frequently told the British public, had, according to Talmudic—*i.e.* Pharisee—theology, no share in the world to come. And yet the Pharisees were the people's favourites! We must suppose—we may well suppose—that the '*am ha 'aretz* was not fully acquainted with this particular Pharisee doctrine. No mass of men will ever accept a narrow theology which puts themselves hopelessly on the wrong side of the line, though they may be willing enough to put their neighbours there by wholesale. Pharisee scorn and contempt the people must have well known; but they would think contempt, though painful to bear, only the necessary consequence of being so holy as the Pharisees were. That the good men claimed a monopoly of heaven would not occur to their admirers. It is easy to impose upon the ignorant commonalty. God will judge with a double judgment those who, for their own selfish ends, play upon the ignorance of their brethren. Pharisaism then was as aristocratic in its own way as Sadduceism. Religion, the Pharisees thought, was meant for men of education—for gentlemen. But what a religion! and what gentlemen! Never done making a fuss in order to secure the interests of their souls—all their learned education running to casuistry, all their religious zeal running to fantastic traditional rites and ceremonies. They were never safe, you must observe, if they forgot for a day, or even for an hour, that 'tradition of the elders' which 'made a hedge about the law.' Their position was like that of Roman Catholic religious orders, if the 'religious' believed

¹ According to Schürer = *μέτροκος*. But Schürer admits that, theologically, Pharisaism could regard only Pharisees as safely within the pale of salvation.

that salvation was confined to priests and monks. (There were no *nuns* among the Pharisees! In these strange pre-Christian days female Pharisees were unknown! Women's rights did not extend so far in Israel as to include a secure right to eternal salvation—at least, the Pharisees thought not.) Yet with all this the formal orthodoxy of the Pharisees not only embraced the elements of ethical monotheism, as Sadducee orthodoxy did, but also its new developments,—the good as well as the bad. Thus St. Paul—in one of his more doubtful flights—could profess himself *qua* Christian 'a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees' (Acts xxiii. 6). And even the Master Himself allowed of the 'Scribes and Pharisees' (observe the significant combination) that they 'sat on Moses' seat,' and deserved acknowledgment as authoritative teachers (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3)—so far as they did not 'make void the word of God' (Matt. xv. 6; cf. xxiii. 16-22). Once the ceremonial law was fairly in use—once an encyclopædia of sin and ready-reckoner of duty was current throughout the nation—it would have needed the highest spiritual genius to keep ceremonies in their right place, as only the outworks which should guard the civic life of moral duty and the citadel of spiritual fellowship with God. I need not say that there was no supreme spiritual genius, after the days of Ezra, till Jesus Christ Himself came. And one of the most important new developments of prophetic faith upset the balance of Israel's religious life. The doctrine of personal immortality—or, as Jewish thought (within Palestine) expressed it, the doctrine of personal resurrection—was now firmly held by the orthodox. It is to the compounding of this doctrine with the ritual law, now fully observed, that we must ascribe all the peculiarities of Pharisaism. The *naïf* subordination of the individual to the community was at an end. The individual fought for his own hand; and any attempt to thrust him back into his old place by discrediting the doctrine of personal immortality must be equally wrong and futile. This is the system of 'law' which St. Paul criticises—contrasts with the Gospel—repudiates—as an empty logical possibility of saving

one's-self, really impossible on the ground of human sin. This system only came into vogue when ritual dominated morality, and when the hope of personal resurrection predominated over national hopes. It would have saved some intellectual confusion if St. Paul had not—for polemical purposes, never for devotional purposes—identified the Old Testament religion with Pharisaism. Again, we may notice the futility of the Deists' identification of Christianity with their 'natural religion.' Pharisaism was Deism in an Eastern and particularist dress. If Jesus Christ had only to preach future rewards and punishments, His mission would have been superfluous. What He did was far greater. He reunited pious men in the fellowship of the kingdom of God. Not suppressing the individual, with his absolute claims and eternal hopes, He subordinated the individual. The revelation of God made in the person and work of Christ awoke self-forgetting enthusiasm in men's minds; loving Christ, they loved one another and denied themselves. For generations, men's only choice had seemed to lie between an indifferent formalism—like that which nearly destroyed the Jewish Church in the Greek age, or like the Sadducean worldliness of our Lord's time,—and, on the other hand, a fanatical effort to be justified by legal works, equally formal and unmoral with the rival system. Spirit was sacrificed to form; religion was almost suffocated in its own clothes. There were, of course, good men, when Christ came, who were neither Pharisees nor Sadducees,—chiefly such as peasants, and fishermen, and village tradesfolk. And perhaps there were some good men in each party. But this was the drift of Pharisee orthodoxy,—this, and not any kind of goodness. To this had sunk the religion of patriarchs and prophets and psalmists. From this Christ saved men. When we think of all these things, we do not wonder at Paul's paradoxical treatment of the law; we wonder that he had a single good word to say for it.

After the government had been for some time thrown into the hands alternately of the Pharisee faction and of the Sad-

ducee, an appeal was taken to Rome, and Pompey *en passant* regulated the affairs of this corner of the world. In other words, after the period of independence opened by the Maccabee insurrection, a foreign conqueror again trampled over the land, and violated the Holy of holies. If popular discontent had already turned to Messianic prophecy, much more must the Messianic spirit now kindle in the people's breast. We hear its growl of discontent in the Psalter of Solomon (viii. xvii.), then we hear its shout of triumph over the miserable fall of its enemy, Pompey, once the Great (ii. 29-31). The Pharisees, too, accepted the belief in Messiah. But they tore it apart from its political basis, and accommodated it to their creed by placing it safely *jenseits* in the region of miracle. Messiah should come as the reward of the people's righteousness. 'If the law were perfectly kept even for one day'—so their successors afterwards taught—'the Messiah should come.' In reality, faith in the Messiah has as little inward connection with work-righteousness as faith in the sacrificial system. Pharisee orthodoxy crucified its Saviour, and lived on undisturbed by the loss of its temple. Nevertheless it was of importance that the Pharisees gave even a nominal support to the Messianic hope.

Thus, before our Lord's work or the work of his forerunner began, belief in a Messiah was well in the foreground of men's minds. The Essenes may have disregarded it, but they were an inconsiderable sect. The Sadducees may have denied it, or formally admitted it as a dogma; but they were few and unimportant. According to some (who attribute to Zealots the Assumption of Moses and the Book of Jubilees, writings in which there is no certain reference to a Messiah) the Zealots were opposed to the general hope. Another view of their watchword—'no mortal shall reign over Israel'—interprets it as referring to a supernatural, pre-existent Messiah.¹ The Pharisee influence led men at least to expect some sort of Christ. Probably the popular mind was urged in the direction

¹ So Baldensperger, *Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, p. 77.

of Zealotism, but was held back by fear. Some few pious souls may have brooded not only over the prophetic picture of a conquering king, but over other more spiritual branches of Old Testament eschatology. Finally, the jealous power of Rome kept a keen watch upon the seditious little land, and the cruel rule of Herod, the pseudo-Jew, appealed to the lower sort of patriotism—was even bold enough to aspire to a sort of parody on the Davidic, if not on the Messianic empire¹—and at any rate kept alive in men's hearts the feeling that they were entitled to live under 'a king of the Jews.'

One other historical event in the post-Exile period is of importance enough to be placed along with the maintenance of Hebrew piety and the revival of the hope of a personal Messiah. The Jews who stayed behind in Babylon formed the first portion of that singular phenomenon of after-days—the Jewish diaspora. Under the influence of many circumstances, Jews spread more and more over the world. Their clannishness may have helped to secure them commercial success. And, though they may often have 'learned the heathen's ways' (Ps. cvi. 35; if 1 Peter is addressed to converted Jews, as Weiss maintains, it depicts their former religious condition as almost heathenish in its degradation [especially iv. 3])—still, the concentration of ritual worship at Jerusalem was to them an almost unmixed blessing. It gave them a spiritual nucleus and rallying-point. And they, with their little dependent groups of proselytes, gave a start to the Christian Church even in Gentile lands—a humble instalment of the second Isaiah's dream, that Israel was to be God's servant on the world's behalf—a provisional realisation of St. Paul's hope (Romans xi.) for Israel and for the world.

VI.

A. The revival of belief in a personal Messiah led to a feverish earnestness and impatience of His coming. It also led to an eclectic combination of many distinct and, so to say, parallel

¹ Westcott, art. HEROD in Smith's *Bible Dict.*

sets of conceptions found in the Old Testament regarding the glory of the latter days. Before we sum up the indications of popular or Pharisaic belief in the coming Messiah, which our Gospels afford us, it may be well to note what shape the doctrine takes in several of the Jewish apocalyptic books, as these are analysed and arranged for us by criticism. (In what is known as the Apocrypha, the doctrine is hardly to be traced. For a time Messianic belief was a sectarian matter.)

(1) We may place first the larger Jewish section of the Sibylline Books (Book iii. 97 *sq.*), assigned by Schürer¹ to c. 140 B.C. In this section, produced at Alexandria, there is the promise of a 'king from the sun' (l. 652)—perhaps= from the East. This king is to introduce a time of peace and plenty, as well as of religious well-being. But no great stress is laid on his person and work, once he has been mentioned. It looks as if he were a literary reminiscence rather than an intensely real faith. Yet it is interesting to observe that, when the outlines of Hebrew predictive prophecy are put in shape for Gentile readers, the figure of the Davidic king is not forgotten. In the Sibyl the figure of the personal Messiah is not connected either with the new doctrine of a general judgment or with the new doctrine of personal immortality. Judgment of living enemies may be implied in what is said of the Messiah, but not judgment of quick and dead. The old prophecies of empire are simply revived.

(2) In the earliest portion (generally assigned to the time of John Hyrcanus, c. 130 B.C.) of the Book of Enoch, the personal Messiah appears, and appears in combination with a doctrine of judgment passed on the dead, similar to what we have seen in the somewhat earlier Book of Daniel. But here again the Messiah is apparently a literary reminiscence, in this case, perhaps, read into the Book of Daniel's 'Son of man.' Messiah is not the Judge; God is the Judge; Messiah comes on the scenes after judgment has been accomplished (chap. 90). Still, even this mechanical juxtaposition of two distinct pro-

¹ *Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ*: Clark's translation.

phetic pictures is significant. The process is to be carried very much further.—Although the place of punishment is not named, the description evidently refers to the valley of the sons of Hinnom (Gehenna; cf. Isa. lxvi.; Judith xvi. 17).

(3) In the Psalter of Solomon (63-48 B.C.), as we have already seen, the person of the Messiah—though strangely enough He is only mentioned in the last two Psalms—seems to occupy an absolutely central position. The expectation of his coming is no languid dogma, but a burning hope. Yet the doctrine of Messiah is very mechanically combined with a doctrine of resurrection. The latter applies to the righteous only; of the wicked it is explicitly and repeatedly said, ‘he shall not rise’ (iii. 13), ‘their inheritance shall be Hades and darkness and destruction’ (xiv. 6). This—opposed as it is to the Book of Daniel—is the more obvious religious form of the doctrine (cf. 1 Cor. xv., where nothing is said of the resurrection of the unblessed dead). ‘Solomon’ resumes the teaching of the immortality Psalms, especially of xlix., although, in the language of his time, he holds out a promise to the righteous of resurrection, and not of a mere escape of the soul from Hades. But both his Psalmist forerunners and he are on the line of what is now called a doctrine of conditional immortality. Both may have applied the old doctrine of Sheol to the wicked; they may both have thought of the wicked as not extinct, but as lingering on indefinitely in their state of life in death. What the scientific value of such a representation might be it is hard to say. If we found the New Testament taking this line, we should not think of insisting on the *vorstellung* of Sheol against the view of the final and utter death of the wicked, as taught by some moderns.

I have said that resurrection and the Messiah are both looked for in ‘Solomon,’ but that the two doctrines are not linked together in any way. Schürer takes for granted¹ that eternal life here means life in the Messiah’s kingdom, and that the resurrection takes place when Messiah has gained the victory,

¹ II. ii. p. 175 n., Eng. tr.

before His blessed reign begins. But this inference seems precarious. It is not supported by anything definite in the language of the Psalter. We cannot prove that the author ever reflected so far on the harmonising of his different doctrines. Even if he did, an expression more than once repeated seems to point to a different combination,—‘Happy are they who shall be born in those days, to see the good of Israel,’ ‘to see the goodness of the Lord’ (xvii. 50, xviii. 7). Why are they specially happy, if the living ‘in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep’? No doubt it is true, as Schürer says, that eternal life originally means life in the coming golden age. But may it not before ‘Solomon’ wrote have come to mean life in another world? In the New Testament, the Messianic age is contrasted with the world to come; yet the world to come is nothing else than the ‘after days’ of prophecy, *i.e.* the Messianic age itself. New Testament theology postulates a double fulfilment—one more natural, one more supernatural—of a single Old Testament hope. Nay, more: Christian millenarianism folds the leaf back once again, and postulates a triple fulfilment,—Christ’s first coming, the millennium, heaven. I think Schürer has fallen into error from failing at this point to distinguish between the loose and the strict application of the term ‘Messianic.’ If we use it in the larger reference, it is no doubt true that ‘from the hope of sharing in the Messianic kingdom, first arose the hope of a bodily resurrection.’ But neither in Isa. xxvi. nor (as Schürer will admit) in Daniel does the personal Messiah figure in the prophet’s eschatology; and, as we have seen, in the earliest Book of Enoch the personal Messiah is loosely and mechanically appended to a doctrine of Judgment. On the other hand, the Old Testament doctrine of the Messianic king is purely *diessseitiges*; and so is its echo in the Alexandrian Sibyl. I see therefore no evidence that, when real weight is once again laid on the promise of a personal Messiah, His earthly reign must be forthwith identified with that supernatural world to come, towards which men’s thoughts have been more and more turned in the interval during which

they have almost forgotten, or wholly forgotten, the personal Messianic king.

(4) I barely mention, for the sake of completeness, the following,—a second Sibylline passage (iii. 36-92), which is fragmentary, and, occurring at a late point of time (c. B.C. 40-30), outside of Palestine, does not concern us; also the Book of Jubilees, and—in the opinion of most scholars—the Assumption of Moses as well—as pre-Christian eschatologies where the personal Messiah is ignored. Such books hardly concern us. We are watching the accretion of other elements to Messianic doctrine, properly so called.

(5) An insertion in the Book of Enoch—the Book of Three Parables—coincides with and illustrates, even if it did not produce, the most important step in advance. That step is due to interpreting Dan. vii. 13 of a personal Messiah. Once the Messiah (as in the Psalter of Solomon) had become the centre of men's religious hopes, that step was almost inevitable. And, on the other hand, whatever was read into and then read out of the Book of Daniel—which had secured, or was fast securing, canonical authority—would carry far greater weight than any unauthorised theology. Now, as Schürer¹ observes, this interpretation of Daniel is pregnant with the doctrine of Messiah's pre-existence—we may add, with other most important additions to Messianic belief—with Messiah's judgship of quick and dead, with Messiah's function as introducing the resurrection. Whether the Book of Three Parables had much or little influence, views similar to those it contains *must* have been held by all scribe exegetes of the Book of Daniel, as soon as the personal Messiah came to be eagerly expected. We find the Messiah's pre-existence in the post-Christian Apocalypse of Ezra, and also sporadically² in the Talmud. Other Jewish authorities quoted for Messiah's judgship are somewhat unsatisfactory;³ and even those who think that the doctrine was for a little a characteristic feature of Judaism,

¹ II. ii. 162.

Baldensperger, *Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, p. 74.

² *Ib.* p. 73.

admit that it was soon cancelled from dislike to the Christian doctrine of Messiah's Second Advent.¹ Again, both Fourth Ezra and the contemporary Apocalypse of Baruch 'discuss with keen interest, and with great fulness, the resurrection and the state of the soul after death (ap. Bar. 50. 51; ap. Ea. 7, 32; [6, 1 f; 51 f.), so that the Messianic epoch sometimes appears meaningless, cf. 14, 35.'² This confirms what we have been saying—first, that Messianic doctrine came to be inseparably associated with the hope of resurrection; and, secondly, that the two never quite amalgamated in Jewish minds, but continued to show traces of their separate origination.

The Book of the Three Parables coincides then with the form of Messianic doctrine, based on current interpretations of Daniel, which served as a framework for the revelations of Jesus Christ. Kingdom of God, Messiah's judgeship as His leading function, above all, the name 'the Son of Man' (though not in great prominence—'the Elect One' is the favourite name for Messiah), are found here. Possibly we might go further, and assert that the enlarged Book of Enoch (the Noachian passages do not concern us one way or other) circulated among the friends of the Baptist and of Jesus Christ. The Baptist, the preacher of repentance, gave a new moral depth to the idea of coming judgment; yet, however deepened, that idea was with him, as much as with the second 'Enoch,' the very kernel of the Messianic hope (Matt. iii. 10-12; Luke iii. 9-17). And a pious man in that age could not possibly dissociate the Messianic Judge from resurrection, and the other specially apocalyptic elements in the popular faith; although our scanty notices of the Baptist do not demonstrate that his teaching included these elements. Further, it is noteworthy that the Epistle of Jude quotes Enoch,³ as well as another apocryphal book, the Assumption of Moses.⁴ It is also, perhaps, significant that the first literary product of the

¹ Baldensperger, *Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, p. 80.

² *Ib.* p. 81.

³ Part I. indeed; but the enlarged edition was probably in Jude's hands.

⁴ Our fragments of the book do not contain Jude's quotation; but we have Origen's testimony, as well as inherent probability, to convince us that the quotation came from the apocryphal book.

apostle John—in early life one of the Baptist's disciples (as we learn from his own Gospel), then one of Christ's chosen three—was an Apocalypse. We cannot, of course, prove that 'Enoch' circulated among the pious peasantry from whom the Gospel first gained recruits, and to whom, according to the flesh, Christ Himself belonged. But the idea is by no means improbable. And at any rate similar ideas, based on Daniel, were current in the land; and Christ drew His phraseology—not only His self-designation—from Daniel. Matt. xxvi. 64 (*para*) puts this beyond a doubt: and a strong apocalyptic current—apocalyptic more than ethical—must have set through the minds of Christ's first disciples, both during and after Christ's earthly life. On the other hand, the name Son of Man was not an absolutely unmistakable claim of Messiahship; it was not of the nature of a challenge. Plain as its meaning must have been, it was not so plain as to overbear the perplexity which friends and enemies, outsiders and disciples, all felt at the unexpected shape which Christ gave to His Messianic life. The unambiguous name of the Messiah was either (with the people) 'the Son of David,' or else 'the Christ,' or 'the Son of God' (Matt. xii. 23, xvi. 16, xxii. 42, xxvi. 63; John i. 41, 49).¹ The use especially of the last creates an emotion which never attended Christ's use of the title 'the Son of Man.' I am tempted to think that Christ chose the latter title because, while belonging to the circle of apocalyptic ideas, based on the Book of Daniel, on which He, as well as His friends, meant that His stand should be taken, yet it was flexible, and adapted itself to that ethical content which He had to read into every part of the doctrinal framework prepared for Him, in the minds of men, by the providence of God. Though He used the title in reference to Daniel, He may have given it a meaning or emphasis of His own.

I have more than once had occasion to refer to Balden-

¹ I must express my utter dissent from the statement: 'It is indeed very doubtful whether the Jews ever distinctly used the title "the Son of God" of the Messiah.'—Stanton, p. 147.

spurger's very able and learned study of 'The Self-Consciousness of Jesus.' Let me say then, before going further along my own divergent path, that this is why I differ from him—able as he is, he seems to me far too one-sided in his pictures of Messianic belief immediately before Christ. Dogmatically, as I have already hinted, there were three main streams of tendency in Jewish Messianic,—the doctrine of the King (based chiefly on Isaiah and Micah), the doctrine of Judgment (based on the Old Testament 'day of the Lord'), and the doctrine of Resurrection (based on the Book of Daniel). The last is purely supernatural; and the second is capable of being interpreted in a supernatural sense. But the first is a historical category, with historical associations. Nor does the exegetical eclecticism of the Christian era succeed in blending harmoniously all the elements handed to it by the Old Testament and by tradition. These elements are never unified; they are manifold and incoherent—as Baldensperger admits. Why then should we take it for granted that piety, in the age when Christ came, busied itself with the expectation of nothing but a supernatural transformation scene? Could Old Testament prophecy, with its moral sanity, absolutely not hold its own to any extent against the risky supranaturalism of the age? On the contrary, one may think that popular expectation oscillated greatly—from the almost humanist and worldly expectation of a conquering 'Son of David,' to the almost dreamy and otherworldly expectation of a cloud-descending 'Son of Man,' or 'Son of God.' But, further, Baldensperger identifies the strained supranaturalism of the Christian era with its religious earnestness. His own type of religion, one may well believe, is not only different, but is at the opposite extreme; still he thinks that, in the age when Jesus Christ came, religious people could crave nothing from him except a miraculous resurrection, a miraculous millennium. Nay, more: Christ Himself, according to Baldensperger, could not permanently conceive of His mission otherwise than as preparatory and tentative, till He should 'sit on the throne of His glory.'

But surely it was the Pharisees and Sadducees who demanded a sign from heaven (Matt. xii. 38, xvi. 1 *pars*). Whereas disciples felt that Christ had 'the *words* of eternal life.' The truth is, wherever an earnest religious morality comes in, it destroys the sharp edge of the antithesis—so dear both to superstition and to unbelief—between nature and God—natural law and supernatural goodness. Accordingly, wherever there was an earnest moral piety, there were elements in Israel which Baldensperger has omitted to take account of. And, when the Baptist's ministry began, he deepened these elements. And, when Christ took up the Baptist's work, and made it His own, He created a new world of spiritual hopes and fears, of moral beliefs and enthusiasms—a new world strong enough to counterbalance the miraculous 'new world' for which men were impatiently longing—a new spiritual world, strong enough to embrace belief in the supernatural, and yet, ultimately, to reduce the supernatural into due subordination to the moral and the spiritual. Supernatural dogma may have largely been what Baldensperger takes it to have exclusively been. But it was flanked by true piety, with its moral forces and resources. True piety never can be wholly merged in dogma, whether good dogma or bad, whether wholesome or unwholesome.

B. I have now to state briefly what we see of Messianic expectation in the pages of the Gospels, taking some light from contemporary writings. The three main elements, loosely put together, are those already named: the idea of the King, the idea of the Judge, and the idea of the Resurrection. The Baptist revives the hope of the gift of the Spirit; and Christ adds other Old Testament forms, such as the idea of the Servant of the Lord, and the idea of the New Covenant. But these less sharply outlined and more purely spiritual conceptions do not seem to have had much influence till Christ's teaching gave them prominence, and till His creative personality fitted men to understand them.

The 'birth-pangs of Messiah' (cf. Matt. xxiv. 8=Mark xiii. 8) were a fixed part of Jewish Messianic doctrine.¹ Furthermore, not only Elijah, but Jeremiah (Matt. xvi. 14; cf. 2 Mac. ii. 1-7), or 'the prophet' (Deut. xviii. 15; John i. 21, vi. 14, vii. 40; cf. 4 Ezra ii. 18 [a Christian passage] with vii. 28), was expected as a forerunner of the deliverer. There might be several forerunners (Matt. xi. 3=Luke vii. 19).

It was also agreed that the Christ must be born at Bethlehem. For this we have really three distinct witnesses. Luke's narrative of the nativity, wholly distinct as it is from that of the First Gospel, unquestionably implies this Messianic postulate, and it is stated again in John (vii. 42). Besides, the prophecy of Micah (v. 2) could not fail to be insisted on in its literal sense in that age.² Connected with this belief as to the birth-place of Christ is the belief that He should be sprung from the royal race of David—another belief which rests upon a whole mass of Old Testament prophecy, which is implied in the popular name for Jesus ('Son of David,' *passim*), and in the popular conception of the Messianic calling as a calling to empire—which is also maintained by the Pharisees (Matt. xxii. 42 and *pars.*), though possibly we may see hereafter that they had special reasons for making it prominent in answer to the question of Jesus. On the other hand, however, recent apocalyptic had led to the expectation that the Messiah must appear in such supernatural guise that there could be no question who He was (Dan. vii. 13 as then interpreted; Matt. xvi. 1 *pars.*). Along with this we must take John ii. 18, vi. 30, as requests for some overwhelming and crushing display of supernatural glory). Of such sort were the miracles expected of the Messiah (Matt. xi. 4 *sq.* = Luke vii. 22 *sq.*). Hence the peculiar point of the people's question in John, at a time when they are strongly moved by Jesus' works and words—'When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?' (vii. 31.) An artificial harmony, between

¹ Details in Schtröter, II. ii. 154.

² Westcott (*Study of the Gospels*) quotes a Targum to that effect.

the old prophetic doctrine of Messiah's birth at Bethlehem, and the new apocalyptic doctrine of His coming 'with the clouds,' is found in the later Jewish view, that the Messiah was to be concealed from the time of His birth till the time of His manifestation. From John vii. 27 we may infer that this explanation was already current.¹ Perhaps there is an allusion to a kindred theory in the Baptist's words as given in John's Gospel (i. 26, 31). And in Rev. xii. 5 the apostle perhaps plays on the Jewish fancy in a Christian sense.

Of the functions expected from the Messiah we can get no clear view. In the theology of the apocalyptists and of John the Baptist, judgment was the very centre of Messiah's calling. But the kingdom and judgeship of the Messiah, as expected by Jesus' disciples, and as described in popular language by Jesus Himself, tend to move off into the 'age to come' (e.g. Matt. xix. 28, xx. 21). The doctrine of a general judgment of quick and dead was only gradually forming itself when Christ came. Christ asserted it, and claimed the office of judge, thus giving one of the most impressive assertions of His Godhead. But Judaism, though it had been tending to regard Messiah as judge, recoiled in horror, and hailed the Almighty alone as judge of all² (Ap. Baruch i. 4?; 4 Ezra vii. 33-35).

A different representation is involved in the doctrine of Antichrist. When a personal Messiah is read into the Book of Daniel, Antiochus Epiphanes becomes a personal Antichrist. Pictures of Messiah as a conquering king overthrowing his enemies rest on this (cf. Ap. Baruch xxxix. 7—xl. 2, lxx. 9, lxxii. 2-6; 4 Ezra xii. 32, 33, xiii. 27, 28, xxxv.-xxxviii.)³ This answers to the popular wish (John vi. 15 *et passim*).

Again: how a living human Messiah was to be connected with the miraculous 'age to come,' there seems to have been no clear view. If we could hold that the dead were to be

¹ So also Schürer.

² Baldensperger seems to me right in holding that Judaism was moving towards the recognition of Messiah as judge of all, and Stanton (p. 153) right in holding that Judaism had not reached that conception.

³ Schürer's list.

raised at the beginning of the earthly kingdom of God, all might be clear. But there seems no evidence of such a view. A judgment of the living may be placed there, or even a resurrection of the righteous¹—not a resurrection of all the dead or a general judgment. Some indeed held the Messianic age was to be eternal (Dan. vii. 27; Sibyll. iii. 766; Psalt. Sol. xvii. 4; Sibyll. iii. 49, 50; [ii.] Enoch lxii. 14. And so still John xii. 34).² Those who held this view cannot have believed in a general judgment of all the dead. Where such a judgment is believed in, the Messianic age is a limited period, *e.g.* 400 years, 4 Ezra vii. 28. ‘This computation (*Sanhedrin* 99*) rests upon Gen. xv. 13—the bondage in Egypt lasted 400 years—compared with Psalm xc. 15: “Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.” Thus the time of happiness is to last as long as the time of affliction. A different calculation is presupposed in the Revelation, the duration being stated at 1000 years, according to the saying in the Psalms, that one day is with God as a thousand years (Rev. xx. 4-6). This computation also is mentioned in the Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 97*).'³ At the end of the 400 years, 4 Ezra makes Messiah die (vii. 29). Apoc. Baruch does not explain what becomes of Messiah. The syncretists did not know what to do with the central figure in their tradition, even when they had made room for an earthly Christ by interposing a definite Messianic period *before* the general resurrection and judgment and the ‘age to come.’

Certainly there was no conception that a transition was to be made from ‘this age’ to ‘the age to come,’ through the Messiah’s atoning death. The necessity for suffering and death on the part of the Christ was revealed to Jesus in the course of His ministry (Matt. xvi. 3, xvii. 12; John x. 18), found by Him in the Old Testament (Matt. xxvi. 54; Mark ix. 12;

¹ So, *possibly*, Apoc. Baruch. Baldensperger, p. 82.

² Schürer’s list.

³ Schürer, p. 176; cf. also Weber, *Allsynagogale Palæstinische Theologie*, p. 355.

Luke xviii. 31), and taught by Him to His disciples. But it remained the chief 'stumbling-block' to Jewish faith. The Messianic king, the Messianic judge, and the world to come, were simply laid alongside each other; a connection between them—between Messiah, the Day of the Lord, and the supernaturalised version of the 'latter days'—was simply asserted, not made plain. Yet it was unfalteringly asserted, and firmly believed.

Without dwelling on imagery taken from the prophetic pictures of a renovated earth, let us ask what are the doctrines of the unseen world presupposed in the Gospels. Here we have chiefly to follow the teaching of our Lord; but there is no evidence that He is innovating in His teaching on these subjects; there is good ground to believe that He is not innovating. The soul between death and judgment is in Sheol (Luke xvi. 19 *sq.*). But Hades, as in the Book of Enoch, is divided into two compartments. These are separated—not, as in later Jewish teaching,¹ by a line or a hair's-breadth, but by a great gulf. On one side, there is already a rehearsal of the 'tormenting flame' which forms part of the suffering of those condemned to Gehenna. So, in later Jewish theology, Gehenna has its place both before and after the final judgment, *and serves both as a purgatory and as a hell.*² On the other side of the 'gulf' there is a rehearsal of the Messianic banquet. Messiah does not preside at it; but Abraham, the father of the faithful, does so; and the place of honour is next him, or 'in his bosom.' This Rabbinical phrase, afterwards used as a mere metaphor, seems here to retain its literal sense (cf. John xiii. 23). In this way we are able to give due justice to the parable. It teaches a righteous reversal of earthly conditions: those here tormented are there banqueting; those who banquet here (indifferent to others' lot, and therefore seared with the sin of selfishness) are there in torment. We must not treat these pictures as anything but imaginative pictures of the unknowable. But, as such, Christ

¹ Of the Cabbalists. Weber, p. 326.

² Weber, as above.

indorses them ; and—our present point—He derives them from popular opinion. That He meant to teach the finality of the conditions established at death I do not believe (cf. Luke xii. 47, 48, 59). He assumes a wish—though a vain wish—to pass from the abode of the blessed to the chambers of torment, as well as a wish to escape from torment into the abode of the blessed. And there was moral reason why the rich man's wishes should be in no manner gratified. His whole attitude towards Lazarus shows that he has not yet begun to learn the lesson of his new position—the lesson that God's poor have the first place in God's kingdom, and are spiritual aristocrats to whom all honour is due ; while heartless and ungodly rich men, who make an empty profession of faith in God's revelations, but deny Him in their lives, are in God's sight beggarly outcasts.

Apparently the 'paradise' to which Christ promises the penitent robber that he shall be admitted (Luke xxiii. 43) is in these same Elysian fields—the happier part of Hades, where they await their 'coming change.'—Again I say, pictures of the ineffable. The heavenly paradise (2 Cor. xii. 4) is different.

The resurrection, and the eternal life which it inaugurates, belong clearly, in the Synoptic Gospels, to the 'world to come.' Christ inserts His figure, as the Judge, at the centre of these scenes ; but, independently of faith in Jesus, men expected these scenes. The resurrection was the time of reward (Luke xiv. 14). It may be merely an accidental emphasis which makes the resurrection here be styled 'the resurrection of the just.' Elsewhere we are emphatically told that all shall rise again (John v. 29 ; cf. Matt. xvi. 27, xxv. 32). And Daniel had taught men the doctrine of a resurrection of sinners (xii. 2). At any rate, the Christian doctrine throughout the New Testament is, that all must appear before the judgment-seat of God, which is the judgment-seat of Christ (Rom. xiv. 10, 12 ; 2 Cor. v. 10). The state of the blessed in the world to come is generally described as a banquet (Matt. viii. 11 *par.*, xxvi. 29 *par.*, etc.). And this seems to have been a current

Jewish form of speech (Luke xiv. 15). Perhaps Pharisee orthodoxy may have been grossly literal;¹ Christ's teaching was spiritual. Correspondingly, those who are excluded from salvation are said to weep and wail in 'the outer darkness' (Matt. viii. 12, xxii. 13, xxv. 30). But both figures vary; and the metaphor of punishment by the worm and fire of Gehenna, which remains a constant feature of Jewish theology, is first met with by name, so far as I am aware, in the Gospels (Matt. v. 22, 29, 30, x. 28, xviii. 9, xxiii. 15, 33—some parallels in both Mark and Luke²). There is no sign in the Gospels that the punishment of Gehenna was thought of as other than endless. So Daniel had taught (xii. 2); so 4 Ezra and Ap. Baruch teach—both with some pain; the former with very great and bitter pain. And Josephus's account of Jewish opinion (Schürer, i. pp. 381, 383), uses not the New Testament adjective *αἰώνιος*, but the more emphatic and unambiguous *ἀίδιος*, as describing the torments which were thought to await the wicked. It may be possible (Matt. x. 28; cf. Stanton, *Jewish and Christian Messiah*, p. 342) to read a doctrine of annihilation into some descriptions of future punishment both in the Gospels and in the Jewish writings. But such a doctrine of conditional mortality, as we may call it, will have no connection with the earlier doctrine of conditional immortality found in some of the Psalms, or with the doctrine of conditional resurrection found in the Psalter of Solomon. We have no proof that a doctrine of annihilation was explicitly held in any quarter. We have ample proof that a doctrine of endless torment was held by many—was held by most.

Such then was the doctrine of Messiah and of the Last Things, put together about the Christian era by laborious study of the Old Testament. Our account has been sadly im-

¹ Cf. 2 Mac. xiv. 46.

² The Gospel of Mark at any rate may be held to be older than 4 Ezra or Ap. Baruch; and the tradition of our Gospels is of course very much older.

perfect ; the evidence within our reach is scanty and unsatisfactory. But we can have made no mistake as to the rough general outline. Practically, three distinct Old Testament hopes were superimposed one upon another—the hope of a Davidic King, reigning in peace and righteousness under God's blessing ; the hope of just judgment upon all the world and upon every soul ; the hope of a resurrection to life eternal. These were all, from a Christian point of view, valid, God-given hopes. But they had been separately developed in men's minds. And it was not enough simply to piece together heterogeneous predictions. If prophecy had been partial and slow, fulfilment might take unexpected shapes. Its combination of the *disjecta membra*, while really unifying them, might also modify them profoundly. But the Jews of our Lord's time did not think so ; and therefore they committed an offence both against science and against reverence.

In saying this, however, do we not raise a difficulty for ourselves ? The Jews thought that fulfilment must mechanically adapt itself to the letter of prediction ; and they rejected Christ. But the New Testament, believing in Christ, traces out not less mechanically the correspondence of His life and work with the letter of the prophetic word. If we blame the Jews, are we not equally bound to blame the Christian Church ? When we repudiate the Rabbis, are we not condemning the New Testament ?

The answer to this difficulty appears to be twofold. In the first place, there can be no doubt that the New Testament use of Old Testament passages is scientifically wrong, precisely as contemporary Jewish use of the Old Testament is scientifically wrong. The New Testament writers were spiritually of nearer kin to the Old Testament than were the Apocalyptists, with their glaring doctrine of salvation by good works. Jesus Christ, as we have already seen, brought into prominence neglected passages in the prophetic word ; and, in the light of Christ, the New Testament use of the Old Testament was still further widened—and not without good reason. Thus the

New Testament touches the Old Testament at a far greater number of points than those which Jewish eschatology touched; and the New Testament penetrates the spiritual life of the Old Testament to a far greater depth than Jewish eschatology had penetrated. But, in point of form, the New Testament quotations are always perplexing, sometimes ridiculous. I do not wish to speak of Christ's use of the Old Testament. It has been contended by those well able to judge that His Old Testament quotations are rather applications of old language to new circumstances¹—controlled and justified by His spiritual wisdom. This point I have not investigated far enough to offer an opinion on it. And, even if one should find that there is no absolute distinction in kind between Christ's quotations and those of others, still, His supremacy in spiritual wisdom cannot but make a great difference in degree between Himself and His followers in this point as in every other. It is of New Testament writers, then, that we are speaking. And of them we affirm that their use of the Old Testament is thoroughly unscientific. St. Paul, for example, is a Rabbi of genius; but, with all his genius and all his goodness, he is a Rabbi. He is whimsically skilful in defending his (unexercised) right to a stipend—in proving the inferiority of glossolaly to prophecy—in proving the inferiority of law to Gospel (1 Cor. ix. 8 *sq.*, xiv. 21 *sq.*; Gal. iv. 21 *sq.*). His whole treatment of Old Testament history is viewy and one-sided. Like all men of genius and goodness, he always reaches the substantial truth, and he emits astonishing flashes of insight from time to time; but he does this, not only without help from his intellectual methods, but in spite of thoroughly vicious intellectual methods.

There were certainly, if we accept the general correctness of the Gospel history, many fulfilments of the mere details of prophecy. Such was the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem—what could it matter, for the abstract spiritual ends of His ministry, whether He was born at Bethlehem or in Galilee? Such was

¹ This is the view of Haupt, *Die alttestamentlichen Citate in den vier Evangelien*.

even His descent from the Davidic line—what did Christ's human lineage do for Him or for the world? Must we suppose, then, that these points of detail were introduced by God's providence only 'that the scripture might be fulfilled'? Were the accidents of the predictive message so sacred before God that none could be dropped out of the fulfilment? Surely not. Predictions were often unfulfilled. Christ's kingship is not a literal fulfilment of the prediction of a greater David, ruling in peace over imperial Israel. Points of detail, when they startle us by their coincidence with the accidents of prediction, are rather signals, graciously vouchsafed to the state of mind which was found in men during Christ's earthly ministry. Intrinsicly, these points of detail were of no consequence: they were never of any consequence to God; they are of no consequence now to intelligent Christians. But, if they helped a few men towards faith in a Christ who continually bewildered and tasked their minds by the unexpected traits which He revealed, then God might well make good such points of prophetic detail, not for the sake of His own honour, but for the sake of His weak children. And if it be asked, Does not this too elaborate theory leave the evidential force of such fulfilments undiminished after all? I reply: The old evidential argument is gone. For, if other points of detail were not fulfilled, the old argument falls to the ground. And, in these circumstances, men can only be got to believe in a Divine fulfilment of selected points of detail—men can only be got to believe that such fulfilment was a fact, and not a devout imagination—if you show them a special secondary reason for it. When you show men such a reason, those who are inclined to faith in Christ will accept the facts, and those who are stubbornly inclined to unbelief will remain incredulous both as to special details and as to Christ Himself.

But, in the second place, we submit that the New Testament history, or the New Testament facts, are a substantial fulfilment of Old Testament aspirations—partly in that they convey perfectly to mankind what the Old Testament could only im-

perfectly convey—partly, too, because they fulfil (in their own way) the hopes which the Old Testament had awakened in the breasts of God's people. In other words, the Old Testament is a providential preparation for Christ; and Christ is God's fulfilment of what the Old Testament roughly and inadequately typified. For example, in our own subject, the Old Testament was long in attaining to the hope of personal immortality. But the hope of personal resurrection—for so the Old Testament conceived of immortality—was Divinely awakened. This 'extra belief'—if extra belief it is—was necessary for a developed spiritual piety. The passionate struggles recorded in the Book of Psalms are a demonstration that man, once aroused to the full consciousness of what life is, cannot acquiesce in extinction. Hence it was expected that Messiah would—somehow—bring life and immortality to light. And the Divine fact fulfilled this expectation, partly by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, partly by the gift of the Holy Spirit as the pledge of eternal life. The fulfilment was not such as men had looked for; but it was a real and adequate fulfilment none the less. Now, when this correspondence of fact to fact is supposed to involve a similar parallelism between the prophetic word and the Christian reality,—when prophecy is assumed to be a bare, literal, infallible prediction,—an error is fallen into. When St. Peter argues (Acts ii. 25 *sq.*) that Ps. xvi. is a conscious, direct prediction of Messiah's resurrection, he is no doubt wrong. Yet it is true that Ps. xvi. records the awaking by God in a human breast of faith in immortality; and it is also true that Christ is the justification, and the only justification, of that faith. Moral and spiritual piety could only be maintained in the earth by the life and suffering of the Son of God. Thus He is the substance of which Old Testament piety is the shadow. And the shadow religion, or religion of types, did awaken those expectations which—substantially and in their essence, though not literally,—are fulfilled by Christ. New Testament quotations are an unscientific yet roughly accurate expression of this relation.

The importance of what is here positively advanced may be seen if we again contrast our own view with the view of Christ's relation to prophecy advanced by a very careful scholar, Baldensperger. Valuable as Baldensperger's scientific work is, his Christianity is extremely negative. He seems to me, as I have already said, to err in recognising only one form of Messianic hope in Christ's time—the hope of the Judge, who was to introduce the epoch of Resurrection. And hence he seems to me to attach too much importance to the Jewish doctrine of Messiah's pre-existence. I think the Gospels show us that the pictures of the Messianic king had a warm influence on many hearts; and also that Messiah's pre-existence, so far as believed, was a sort of theological curiosity. But if we grant Baldensperger's conception of Messiahship, how does he connect Christ with it? Merely externally. Jesus in His youth was filled, we are told, with the most profound piety, which necessarily led Him, as a Jew, to long for Messiah's coming. Equally naturally, at His baptism, He conceived the thought that He was Himself called of God to be the Messiah; that, says Baldensperger, is the meaning of the recorded miracle. While He waited for the Day of Judgment and the Resurrection of the Dead, He employed Himself in moral teaching. This is the more original side of Jesus' thought; it fills the less Jewish period of His life. For a time His Messianic postulates remained in the background. But all this time there was a contradiction between His outward condition or His outward employments and His inward destiny, as He Himself conceived it. So that, when His death grew imminent, the prospect came as a relief to His overstrained, anxious mind. Now He was able to project His dignity as Messianic judge into a supernatural [and unreal] future. Now He was again at harmony with Himself; but also He was now more Jewish, less original, less Christian; fondly dwelling on eschatological images, He forgot the moralities of the Sermon on the Mount. From this time forward He freely uses the title 'Son of Man.' This has invariably a reference to His coming glory.

When our Gospels represent the title as used before Christ had foretold His death and resurrection, we must suppose that their materials (even—though less than others—those drawn from the ‘Collection of Discourses’) are in confusion.¹

Surely this is pitiable folly. The pious, bewildered peasant who is here described, with his unfortunate, though innocent and unavoidable, delusion that he is a semi-supernatural Being called the Messiah, with his anxious computations, and ingenious compromises, and illusory solutions, is a very different person from the Jesus of history. To Baldensperger the whole Messianic idea is a hallucination. It induced Jesus to speak out; but, except for that, it was a pure misfortune, leading Him into false paths, from which only death could release Him. And, if Christ dramatised His death, that also to Baldensperger is hallucination.

But observe where the source of Jesus Christ’s greatness is found. Confessedly it is His personal character—it is His personal religious experience—which makes Christ supreme, and which induces and enables Him to give Himself out as the Messiah. Again, it is confessedly His claim of Messiahship which makes way for Christ’s Gospel among the Jews, and even among the Gentiles. Was it then mere chance which brought together the unique Person and the unique office? To us the prediction is of God, and the fulfilment is of God; the meeting between the Elect Person and that measure of belief which made His work possible is also of God; and the crowning of His work by death is from God; very peculiarly it is of God. These are not a mass of accidentally related fragments; they are elements in a Divine and spiritual unity. Christ did not grope His way through circumstances, as Baldensperger maintains. No life gives one more fully the impression of harmony and homogeneity than the life of Christ. And why was this? Because Christ was indeed, before His public ministry began, in such fellowship with God as no circumstances could disturb, and because, going forward

¹ *Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, p. 180.

hand in hand with God, in clearest spiritual vision, He went safely, seeking not His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him, recognising God's appointment in every circumstance, so that nothing was opaque to Him, but all was transparent and irradiated with glory. If we deny that Sonship meant with Christ no more than a Messianic predicate, we do so because Christ's Messianic ministry was the flowering of a life of experience of God's Fatherhood and of the practice of Sonship during Christ's silent years in early life. If we say that Christ 'claimed' to be the Messiah, we do not mean that Christ sought great things for Himself, but that Messiahship was a mysterious Divine idea—not a hallucination, not a historical accident—something about which Jesus Christ may be expected to know more than we do, and in regard to which His statements are final. If, again, we agree with Baldensperger, that the ascription of Messiahship to Christ has ceased to be of supreme interest to Christians, it is not because, like Baldensperger, we held Jesus to be less than a Jewish Messiah, but because He is far greater; because when the world recognised Him as Messiah, it only passed through an initial lesson to train it for recognising Him as God and Saviour.—As a point of mere detail, it is impossible to carry through Baldensperger's rearrangement of the passages where Jesus calls Himself 'Son of Man,' so as to throw them into a late period, when the image of the coming Judge may have filled His mind. The real Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath—seeks and saves that which is lost—forgives sins on earth. According to Baldensperger, 'the Son of Man' and 'earth' have nothing to do with each other. But in Christ's life the phrase is not *merely* eschatological; it implies eschatological predicates, no doubt, but, like everything else in Christ, it is chiefly concerned with the living spiritual relations into which He conducts men.

Of all these spiritual relations, and of the facts on which they rest, the Bible witnesses to us. It is not an unerring witness. It speaks in the dialect of its time, and falls into the blunders of its age. But the Bible is a sufficient witness. For,

when one reads it with an awakened conscience, and with dawning belief that Jesus as a fact is Christ—in other words, when God gives us His Holy Spirit—we are borne past the inadequate intellectual forms of the Bible's witness to Christ, and find ourselves in touch with Christ Himself, and with God in Him. And, adequate or inadequate, no intellectual statement of Christianity is food for the soul. But, adequate or inadequate, any witness-bearing is sufficient which refers us to the Master; any sign-post answers its purpose if it guides us home. Why will men idolise the Book, or quarrel over the Book? God has left blots in the Book that we may not stop short at it, or make of it an idol, but may apprehend its true use—that it testifies to us of Christ.

Another objection will be made here—Are you wiser than the inspired writers? Yes, in some respects I think we are. We are eighteen hundred years older than they; we have seen for all that time new displays of God's wonderful works; we have the modern revelation of science, as well as the age-long revelation of nature and conscience, and the supreme revelation of Christ. If the human authors of the New Testament had been men of science, their book would no doubt have been stronger than it is, and a certain class of very real difficulties in the way of Christian faith would have been obviated. But we have seen, again and again, that God has not chosen to minimise difficulties; He prefers to overcome them. In this instance, it is God's will to bestow inspiration upon men who are spiritually and morally qualified for His service, and whose position in history fits them for bearing witness to His great deeds, and to the great principles which underlie His deeds. But it is not God's will to work prodigies in the sphere of intellect. Most evidently He did not make the Bible writers infallible, but used them, fallible as they were, errors and all, 'that the exceeding greatness of the power might be of God, and not from ourselves.' We may truthfully say that 'Divine oversight prevented any *serious* intrusion into the New Testament of elements which would detract from its spiritual power

and sublimity';¹ but further than this we had better not go. What does it matter? 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.' Through God's indwelling, the Bible writers, though fallible, are wiser than all their critics.

VII.

The work of the Baptist, out of which Christ's public ministry quickly grew, put ethical content again into the feverish eschatological hopes which filled the nation, even while it stimulated these hopes. He 'gave knowledge of salvation unto God's people in the remission of their sins' (Luke i. 77). His message was 'Repent'; his motive was 'the Messianic Judge is near at hand' (Matt. iii. 10, 12). His symbolism of baptism shows that he revived the hope of the gift of the Holy Spirit. And, finally, he was enabled to testify that Jesus was the destined Messiah (John i. 29 *sq.*, 32 *sq.*; cf. Matt. xxi. 25 *pars*). His subsequent message to Jesus (Matt. xi. 3=Luke vii. 19) has been absurdly interpreted as disproving this. Surely the reasons why John should vacillate are plain to the dullest eye. Surely that message itself implies a hesitating belief in Jesus' Messiahship; it betrays no fixed impression that Jesus is anything else than Messiah, although it suggests that He may possibly be only a second prophetic forerunner—and that is obviously a new thought to the anxious questioner. The truth is, gentlemen who are not much troubled themselves with religious belief—and therefore not much troubled with religious doubt—must see faith removing mountains, or they will insist that it is not faith at all. The message really proves to us just these two things, first, that the Baptist's conception of the Messiah's work was different from Christ's, and, secondly, that the Baptist was human.

The chief peculiarity in the Baptist's work was the rite which he administered. Jeremiah (xxxii. 31) had prophesied that, under the new covenant, all should know the Lord;

¹ Stanton, p. 349.

Joel (ii. 28) and the author of Zech. xii. (10) that the Holy Spirit should be poured out upon all. This is what is referred to by the Baptist. He recalls men's minds to the promised gift of the Spirit; and he connects the gift with a personal Messiah, as the Old Testament had never done. The true antitypical baptism he describes as consisting, not only in water, but in fire (Matt. iii. 11 = Luke iii. 16). To refer this fire to the penal flame which destroys the chaff is absurd. If that were the meaning, it would involve a strange theory of restitutionism, very foreign to the Baptist's temper. He is evidently referring to Isa. iv. 4, 'When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning.' In administering a symbolical baptism, John fixed men's minds on their need of inner renovation, and became, we might almost say, the author of one of the two Christian Sacraments.

Our accounts of John's teaching are fragmentary. But we can hardly err if we assume that he built, in an ethical spirit, upon the foundation laid by the Apocalyptists, as well as on that of the Old Testament prophets. Whether or not he used the words 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' that announcement, in an eschatological sense, must have been the main motive by which he urged men to repentance (Matt. iii. 12 = Luke iii. 17). And we have already seen reason to believe that the Apocalyptic writings were a favourite study with some of Jesus' disciples. Hence we must conceive of Jesus Christ as surrounded by influences which He valued, and of which He made use, but to which He could only give a partial sympathy. He recognised the Baptist as sent by God. Thereupon the Baptist recognised Him as 'the coming One' (Matt. iii. 11 *par.*, xi. 3 = Luke vii. 19). This bond was necessary to Christ; God had willed it; but, while the Baptist's grand work helped Christ, the imperfect views of John created embarrassment for the Master in the strange turmoil of opinions. Practically, Jesus Christ is always

isolated ; He disappoints John ; He bewilders His own disciples. Yet He could not tell men that John was partly in the wrong. He could only make appeal to John himself : ' Blessed is he whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me.'

We regard Christ then as so far committed to a type of doctrine which He had gradually to remodel. In a certain sense, He must have indorsed the eschatological view of Messiahship. We cannot doubt that His self-designation, ' the Son of Man,' is derived from the popular reading of Daniel—whether embodied in the Enochic Book of Three Parables, or whether embodied only in tradition, matters nothing. His teaching always implies that a day of judgment is to be conducted by Himself (Matt. v. 20, vii. 21). As time goes on, this feature grows ever clearer and clearer (xvi. 27, xxvi. 64). But we may be allowed to suggest that Christ chose the designation ' Son of Man ' as one naturally fitted to receive a more human and gracious significance—that He made prominent what He found most congenial in the given circle of eschatological ideas, and threw the rest into the background. And we may also perhaps suggest that much of Christ's teaching comes to us through a distorting medium of eager apocalyptic hopes. What was a symbol to Christ may sometimes be reported as if it were meant literally ; what He vaguely indicated and lightly touched may sometimes be over-coloured by the zeal of tradition. And therefore the use by Jesus of the unusual designation ' Son of Man,' though it indicated His partial indorsement of the usual circle of eschatological beliefs, did not mark Him out beyond question as a claimant of Messiahship, in view of the unexpected and inexplicable character of His ministry.

When Christ appeared in public, He assumed the *rôle* of a prophet. Even in cleansing the Temple (John ii. 13 *sq.*), and in making His first appeal for recognition at Jerusalem, He probably impressed the people as a great prophet. Still more plainly, in His Galilean ministry, did Christ show as a teacher.

The Jews had expected Elijah, or other prophets, to relieve the Messiah of any such work. No doubt the Baptist himself thought he had sufficiently instructed the people by his preparatory ministry of repentance. Deeds, not words, were expected from the Messiah. But Jesus Christ felt that He had, at least in the first instance, to *teach* the people (Luke iv. 18, 43, etc.). He must assume what technical theology calls His prophetic office. Or, rather, His priestly functions, which technical theology rightly puts at the centre of Christ's work, could be best discharged—perhaps could be alone discharged—in the form of a prophetic work. His spiritual service of God implied a moral and spiritual service of man. In the first instance, that service took the form of preaching. To undervalue men's words was a popular error in Christ's time. It has become an aristocratic and intellectual folly in our own day. When men disparage talkers, let them remember that the world's redemption began in Christ's choosing a ministry of words rather than a showy ministry of deeds.

There were works, it is true, in the ministry of Christ; but these works were strictly subordinated to the ends of His teaching. His miracles were confirmations and illustrations of what He taught; they had no independent value (Mark viii. 12; John vi. 26). Yet, in their place, they were necessary. They proved that 'the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins'; they were a verification, in the visible phenomenal region, of those spiritual powers which He claimed. They fairly proved to the men of Christ's generation that 'the kingdom of God was come upon them' (Matt. xii. 28 = Luke xi. 20). And, when the imprisoned Baptist—unable to comprehend Christ's ministry of teaching, and sorely tried by his own sufferings—sent to ask whether Jesus was indeed Messiah, or only a second forerunner, then again our Lord, with allusion to passages in the Book of Isaiah, made His appeal principally to the character of His teaching, but partly also to the character of His mighty works (Matt. xi. 5 = Luke vii. 22). Jesus Christ was confident that He was possessed of super-

natural powers; yet He was resolved to confine supernatural powers to a subordinate and secondary place. They 'asked Him to show them a sign from heaven' (Matt. xvi. 1 = Mark viii. 11; cf. xii. 38 = Luke xi. 16). In what words our Lord met this scoffing demand it is not very plain—whether He told His antagonists that signs were not given to their state of mind (Mark), or that His preaching was itself the truest sign (Luke xi. 29), or that one last appeal should be made to His countrymen's faith by His death and resurrection (so Matt. xii. 40). I cannot stop to arbitrate between these different traditions. But however Jesus spoke once—or more than once—in answer to such a demand, it is plain what answer to the demand was shaped by the whole tenor of His life. A far more impressive and convincing sign was afforded by His self-restraint in the use of miracles than could have been afforded by any theatrical display. 'This temperance in the use of supernatural power is the masterpiece of Christ. It is a moral miracle superinduced upon a physical one. This repose in greatness makes Him surely the most sublime image ever offered to the human imagination. And it is precisely this trait which gave Him His immense and immediate ascendancy over men. . . . It was neither for His miracles nor for the beauty of His doctrine that Christ was worshipped. Nor was it for His winning personal character, nor for the persecutions He endured, nor for His martyrdom. It was for the inimitable unity which all these things made when taken together.' It was for 'the combination of greatness and self-sacrifice . . . the mighty powers held under a mighty control, the unspeakable condescension, the *cross of Christ*.'¹

This too is what modern objectors to miracles have to face. Miracles cannot be wiped off the Gospel record. If we insist on ridding Christ's history of supernatural events, we find that the whole becomes fabulous. Miracles help on the development of events; they are required to explain the march of events. When you turn them this way and that way, they still

¹ *Ecce Homo*, ch. v. pp. 45, 46.

maintain, in most cases, their verisimilitude. I hope we shall see some proofs of this statement in the course of the present essay. But further: the special point here is this, that Christ's use of miracles is *in character*. It is kept in subordination to a moral purpose, higher than any miracle. Who invented this conception? It is not the fruit of accident; for it runs into the detail of Christ's history. It must be studied in detail; it can only be appreciated in its aggregate effect. And the conclusion which an honest mind will come to is, we believe, this,—that, small errors apart, the Gospels form a true record of the performance of a great character in the use of a power which we cannot comprehend, but which is subordinated to a purpose that we can comprehend, and that constitutes our way of salvation.

A. Christ's message to the world was therefore, in the first instance, to this effect: He proclaimed Himself, in partially veiled language, as the Messianic king, and the coming judge; and He undertook to train for the coming kingdom those who joined themselves to Him by faith as His disciples. The contents of the idea of the kingdom of God, as taught by Christ, were chiefly ethical. Hence the transition from the preparatory epoch to the final condition of things was to begin by evolution, or moral growth, whatever revolutionary and supernatural forces might come to play a part before the final state was reached. And hence, even in the preparatory period, the kingdom of God was already, in one sense, present.

All this needs proof; and we shall now proceed to give proof. Let us take the last point first. Christ spoke, no doubt, of the kingdom of God as 'at hand'—coming—future—and this all through His ministry (Matt. iv. 17, v. 20, xix. 28). But He spoke of Himself, with very partial concealment, as Messiah. Could Messiah be in the world, and the kingdom of God *not* be in the world? Again, He exercised public functions. His disciples baptized converts (John iii. 26, iv. 2); He gradually built up a new Theocracy, with twelve

apostles answering to the twelve tribes, and with seventy evangelists (Luke x. 1) answering to the seventy elders. While Christ organised all this, did He think of His kingdom as purely future? Or was it subsequent tradition which, at a time when men strained their eyes for signs of the Second Advent, gave that colour to Christ's sayings? We shall incline to the second alternative when we recall some of Christ's other sayings. Though He says, 'Ye shall not enter,' 'ye shall enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 20, vii. 21), He also says, 'yours is the kingdom of heaven' (v. 3, 10); 'the kingdom of God is come upon you' (Matt. xii. 28 = Luke xi. 20); 'the kingdom of heaven is among you' (Luke xvii. 21). Surely this proves that the kingdom of God was, according to Christ, in one sense already present where He Himself was present.

Further proof of the same thing may be furnished by the answer to our first two questions,—what were the contents of the idea of the kingdom of God in Christ's teaching, and how the preparatory period was to give place to the final period. Here the reader may be reminded that Christ's prophetic work was His own thought, and came as a sore surprise even to His forerunner. So important were moral methods to Christ, and so original was Christ in this way of thinking. But our chief proof-text at present must be the Lord's Prayer. In it 'Thy kingdom come' stands immediately between 'Hallowed be thy name' and 'Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth' (Matt. vi. 9, 10). That is the nature of the kingdom of God, according to Christ. It is the hallowing of the Father's name, the doing of the Father's will,—essentially that and nothing else. In order that these things may come about, Christ teaches us to pray 'Thy kingdom come.' There is no trace here of an eschatological transformation scene. We are still on firm moral grounds; we pray God Almighty to work, but to work along the line of His own moral and spiritual laws. Now this is what becomes us as men, and what truly concerns us. Sudden outbursts of Divine glory may occur in the development of God's purposes; if they do, we shall give thanks for

them; but it is not our part to ask for them. Longings for Christ's return are pardonable; yet surely it is our weakness rather than our strength which sighs 'Lord Jesus, come quickly!' To me, at least, it is incredible that the Christ whom the Gospels reveal should teach His disciples to pray for a supernatural catastrophe,—if that were the meaning of His coming kingdom. Christ came not to judge, but to save the world; and do we chiefly long for the day of judgment? But, if that be not its meaning, what does the prayer really mean? The steady unfolding of God's merciful purpose towards our race,—that is what it asks. That is the true goal of life, individual and social.

Further proof what Christ was thinking of, when He spoke the Sermon on the Mount, is given by the phrases, 'Ye are the salt of the earth'; 'ye are the light of the world' (Matt. v. 13, 14). I confess that these phrases stand pretty much isolated in His synoptic discourses. But I should be inclined to explain that less by the unfamiliarity to Christ Himself of the thoughts they contain than by their unfamiliarity and lack of interest to His reporters. At any rate, if we grant that the phrases are genuine—and we have no solid ground for questioning their genuineness—then we see that, when He addressed the Sermon on the Mount to the newly chosen twelve, Jesus was reckoning on the growth of His kingdom by moral influence—and on its growth not only within Palestine, but throughout the world.

Still another indication of Christ's feeling is given in the highest of all His utterances preserved in the synoptic Gospels. He does not say 'all things are to be delivered unto me,' but 'all things have been delivered unto me of my Father' (Matt. xi. 27 = Luke x. 22). It was in this consciousness that Christ lived.

Again, Christ's parables give us a view of the prophetic programme as He conceived it. We may hazard the conjecture that He chose to speak in parables, not only that He might baffle and discourage unfriendly minds, but that He might

suggest unwelcome truth to friendly but backward disciples. And we may further conjecture that the rather disappointing interpretations, which are attributed in the Gospels to Christ, are not really derived from His teaching; or, if they are, that tradition has missed their point. We have to do, of course, with Christ's distinctively theocratic parables. And, looking at these for ourselves, in their historical setting, we find that they teach us to think of the kingdom of God as passing through the stages of earthly change. First, the parable of the Sower gathers up the sad lesson of experience, that even the highest ministry of God's grace, through His own Son, will not attain a universal success, but only a partial, qualified success, largely mixed with failure. Next, the parable of the Tares teaches the almost stranger lesson, that, even within the 'little flock,' where one might expect to find only true 'children of the kingdom,' there will be found impostors. Another parable—of the Drag-net—repeats this lesson, emphasising perhaps the miscellaneousness of the characters who will give in professed adherence to the Christ. Thirdly, the parables of the Mustard-seed and of the Leaven teach, almost in so many words, that the kingdom of God is not to come abruptly, but by the slow development of moral and spiritual influences,—a lesson still more explicitly taught in St. Mark's parable of the seed growing secretly. Fourthly, the treasure parables perhaps teach us that the reward of Christ's service does not accrue only in the world to come, but verifies itself even now by the joy which it brings into human life, and by the sacrifices which it enables men triumphantly to endure.

Now, I can understand why Christ spoke these parables if He wished to instil into His disciples' minds the unwelcome truth that His kingdom was to come slowly, gradually, imperfectly, humanly. Practically, that is the gist of the lesson which these parables, in God's providence, have taught the Christian Church. I cannot understand why Christ spoke these parables if He only wished to warn outsiders of judgment to come.

A third stage in Jesus Christ's account of the nature of His service is found near the end of His ministry, when He is looking forward to death and to separation from His disciples. Verbally, the 'kingdom of God' may now be mentioned by Him chiefly as belonging to the glorious future which lies beyond. But, in the meanwhile, His disciples have a lifetime of Christian service to spend; and their Lord warns them that this is a period of probation. Emphasis is now laid chiefly upon individual responsibility; but, if the moral growth of the aggregate kingdom of God falls out of sight, the moral progress of its individual members is made more than ever conspicuous (Matt. xxiv. 45—xxv. 30).

B. We have now inspected the character of Christ's teaching at different stages. We may therefore sum up our impressions of His ministry.

Christ's *plan* has often been spoken of. It would perhaps be safer and more correct to say that His public ministry is ruled by an *aim*. His aim is the conversion of Israel. He seeks to be recognised by Israel as the Messiah, in order that a spiritually regenerate Israel may shine with Him as a light to the world, such as the second Isaiah describes. Therefore we must modify the language we used, in speaking of Christ's message to the world, so far as to recognise that, in the first instance, Christ's message was addressed only to Israel. This restriction is explained by the principle, that the highest Gospel of God must come 'to the Jew *first*'—to the possessor of the earlier 'oracles of God.' In this matter we must unflinchingly trust Christ's wisdom. And, if any one affirms that Jesus Christ was too narrow-minded to conceive the possibility of a Messianic ministry other than one to Jews, we give this statement the lie direct. No sympathetic student of the prophets could leave the Gentile world outside of his philosophy of history; least of all could Jesus Christ do so. What He tells us Himself is that He was commissioned by a higher power to preach to Jews, and only to Jews. 'I

must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also ; for therefore was *I sent* ' (Luke iv. 43). But, on the other hand, 'I was not *sent* but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel ' (Matt. xv. 24). Christ is conscious of an absolute Divine mission, within absolutely definite limits ; and those, who prefer to believe that Christ picked His way through unintelligible circumstances, as any good blundering man might do, will find out their mistake one day. In the phrase, 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' there is a whole compendium of the history of the Old Testament—there is a whole world of Divine sorrow. God's sheep ill-tended, astray, lost,—such were the thoughts, precluded by many a prophet (1 Kings xxii. 17 ; Jer. xxiii. 1, 2, 6 ; Ezek. xxxiv. ; Zech. xi. 4, xiii. 7), which now filled the mind of the Good Shepherd. His language was a bitter condemnation of the rulers of Israel—a tender appeal to the despised populace, who 'fainted, as sheep not having a shepherd' (Matt. ix. 36 ; Mark vi. 34), who 'moved Him' to 'compassion'—the warm-hearted, well-meaning, blind, foolish people, the 'common people,' who 'heard Him gladly,' and next day heard His enemies not less gladly—so high in their nominal prerogatives as God's elect, so heathenish in their actual ignorance and irreligion. Can we wonder if, on His disciples' first mission, He gave them the instruction, 'Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt. x. 6)? He Himself was come 'to seek and to save that which was lost' (Luke xix. 10); here, at His own door, within His Father's fold, were lost sheep ; and to them especially, by the Father's will, He was sent.

Christ's aim then, or His effort, was to bring the masses of the Jewish people to accept His gospel. An aim is greater and better than a plan ; if a man gets his aim from God, and adheres to it, he may frame twenty plans by the help of God's Providence, and twenty times set these aside at the call of Providence, without justly incurring the charge of vacillation. It is not the wise man, but the fool, who swears by a rigid method, as if the Divinity dwelt in it. But Christ's very effort

failed. Not only His plans were transformed; His very aim perished, in its outward form—died, and rose again, reshaped by God's will. Even when God has given a man his aim, man must surrender it back to God if God so choose. His thoughts are not our thoughts, His ways are not our ways. If God fulfils Himself, then ultimately God will fulfil, in its deepest sense, the aim, the hope, the longing of every child of His. But meantime we must learn to pray, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.' This is part of man's lot; it is part of man's salvation; and Christ had become a man.

With such an aim before Him as the conversion of His people, Christ naturally did not begin His ministry by predicting His own death. Doubtless—if we are to speculate on what might have happened—though Christ had found a welcome in Israel, He might have been rejected and slain by Gentile unbelief. But it would seem scarcely natural that Christ should look past His present efforts in Israel—past His present hopes—to that remote and contingent event. The Fourth Gospel stands alone in making the Baptist hail Christ as the sin-removing Lamb of God, and in making Christ speak, at an early stage in His ministry, of His destined 'lifting up' (John i. 29, 36, iii. 14). On such points we cannot well accept the unsupported testimony of John's Gospel; for, though we believe it rests in the main on true recollections, different periods of time are apt to be mingled together in its highly idealising treatment of the discourses which it contains. Subsequently, we know that the Baptist's faith wavered (Matt. xi. 2, 3 = Luke vii. 19); that is intelligible enough if he recognised Jesus as Messianic Judge—less intelligible if, like a Christian after Pentecost, he recognised Jesus as the propitiation for the world's sin. Besides, the peculiar phrase, which is attributed to the Baptist in John i. 29, belongs to the vocabulary of the evangelist himself (1 John iii. 5). It is possible that a historical reminiscence may lie at the basis of his record of the Baptist's words; but it is improbable that any mind except that of Jesus Christ conceived the thought of the Atonement before the fact

of the Atonement was complete. The other phrase, attributed by St. John to our Lord Himself during His early Judæan ministry—a reference to His ‘lifting up’—is in itself vaguer, and may have been used without implying death on the cross; though probably the evangelist, when he incorporated it in his record, understood it in the most pregnant sense (cf. viii. 28, xii. 32).—There are traces of Synoptic phraseology in the conversation with Nicodemus, which go to vindicate its general correctness (vv. 3, 5, 13, 14).

We may hold, then, that Christ did not come before the Jewish world as one destined to death. And some will go further. Some will hold that His ministry is not psychologically intelligible if He knew it to be foredoomed to failure. He might, as we have already said, have looked for death elsewhere, if not at the hands of Israel. He might have done so; but, in the Gospels, the death of Christ is intimately bound up with Israel’s sin in rejecting Him.

After a considerable time, when the signs of enmity were thickening around Him, Christ began to teach His disciples about His approaching death. He inferred it, or at least He proved it to them, by the fate of the Baptist (Matt. xvii. 12), by the signs of the times (Matt. xvi. 3?), and by the witness of Old Testament Scripture. It does not follow that, because prophecy and psalms tell us much of the suffering servant of God, or because ritual typology confirms their message, therefore their message had been plain even to Christ Himself from His youth. His contemporaries evaded the force of such a passage as Isa. liii., even when their exegesis compelled them to refer it to the Messiah; and it is quite in the analogy of Providence if Christ Himself, who ‘learned obedience by the things which He suffered,’ learned to read the Bible by what He Himself endured. But from the first Christ announces His death as exemplifying a law of His kingdom (Matt. xvi. 25), and as appointed by the Father’s will (*ib.* v. 23) for the salvation of many. This truth rings out more and more clearly, down to the last. There is grief and anguish in

it at times; 'strong crying and tears'; but there is no faltering.

This truth, of the necessity of His death, is the second great point in Christ's teaching. Previously He had announced to Israel that Judgment and the Kingdom of God were drawing nigh—He the judge, and the head of God's kingdom. Now that room has to be made for the announcement of His death, the whole Gospel message has to be recast. We distinguish four great doctrines which are now made prominent.

(1) First of all: the Atoning Death is to be followed by resurrection. This is Christ's way of satisfying the general expectation that Messiah would be—somehow—connected with resurrection, and with the gift of immortality. Or rather, this is God's way of fulfilling His promises in the peculiar circumstances of Divine suffering and human unbelief, under which Christ's work was accomplished—in the Divinely permitted and providentially ordered circumstances under which Christ's work was accomplished. Such a doctrine as this—the resurrection of Messiah, and His resurrection after a shameful death on behalf of sinners—was a novelty. It failed to penetrate the minds of Christ's disciples till after the resurrection. Possibly, as the left wing of critics urge, the Gospels make His predictions more explicit and detailed than they really were. But their general drift is natural enough—Christ told His friends what was to happen, but they could not take it in. We shall endeavour by and by to dispose of the theory (Weiffenbach) that Christ's prediction of resurrection was the same thing as His prediction of His Second Advent.

(2) The second effect of Christ's rejection was the ruin of Jerusalem and of the Jewish state. Their attitude towards Christ necessarily determined their destiny (Matt. xxii. 8 = Luke xiv. 24; Matt. xxi. 41 and *pars*). For His position was qualitatively greater than that of all His forerunners (*ib.* v. 37 *pars*). Hence His rejection was a sin above all other acts of sin, and should be visited upon the very generation which had been guilty of it (Matt. xxiii. 36 = Luke xi. 51).

And history confirms this prediction. The degraded type of Messianic expectations, to which the Jewish people turned when they rejected Jesus, hurried on their fate.

(3) The third effect which Christ prophesied would result from His death was the transition of His gospel from the Jews to the Gentiles. This is intimately bound up with the previous point. When the mission of Christ took on an aspect of mere judgment towards Israel, its more proper and more gracious aspects must necessarily be turned towards others, or perish altogether. Could they perish? Could the apocalyptic Christ, the judge, utterly supersede the human Christ, our brother and Saviour? The prophets had foretold that the Gentiles should share Israel's blessing; was Israel's unbelief to disinherit the Gentiles? Christ Himself had turned away from the judge's office to assume the office first of a prophet, then of a priest; even in His death He 'shed His blood for many unto remission of sins,' and 'gave His life a ransom for many.' How, or where, was His work to take effect? No doubt, it was a revolutionary thought for any servant of God within Israel that the gospel should pass to Gentiles. But Christ's mission was without a parallel; and the sin of his rejection was an event without parallel.

Even in His earlier teaching, much occurs which prepares us for this last decree.

(a) Comparatively early in His ministry (Matt. viii. 5 *sq.* = Luke vii. 2 *sq.*), our Lord had been very forcibly struck by the faith of a Gentile centurion. Requested to heal the man's servant, Christ was on His way to visit the patient, in order to work a cure, when He was arrested by a remonstrance from the Gentile. It was too great an honour, he said, that the Master should come under his roof. And was it necessary? He himself, as a soldier, knew what it was to obey, what it was to command: would it not be enough, without visiting the patient, if the Master *commanded* the mysterious powers subject to Him that the patient must be cured? As I read the story, Jesus was equally surprised and pleased by this bold

suggestion. It is no doubt possible that the Roman may have had unwarranted superstitious fancies as to the agencies through whom Christ wrought His cures. But at heart the man's belief was right. He had faith in Christ—greater faith than Christ had found in any of His countrymen by blood. May we conjecture that Christ had never thought of working a cure from a distance? Normally, it would be more characteristic of His loving nature, moved with compassion, to visit the sick, to speak with them, to touch them. But exceptional faith is sure of an exceptional response from Christ. Having the warrant of such marvellous faith in the sick man's master, Christ spoke the word, and the man was instantly cured, without even seeing his benefactor. Subsequently, cures at a distance figure repeatedly in Christ's biography. Christ associated with this cure the promise, that many such Gentiles should enter into the kingdom of God (Luke xiii. 29 transfers this promise elsewhere). If we may believe the First Gospel, Christ already formulated the threat that unbelieving Israel should be expelled from that kingdom (Matt. viii. 12).

Now this is an instance of miracle with which sceptical criticism, I think, will be at a loss to deal. Of course it is possible to exclaim at the fantastic reverence attributed to the centurion. But, in that age, there were not many enlightened sceptics; men's errors were in a different direction; and the officer's message must be judged as a devout heathen's attempt to conceive the astonishing new spiritual forces which were breaking in upon his life. They affect him, I think, naturally: his message is in character. And Jesus' surprise and pleasure are also in character. What then? Did 'moral therapeutics' work at a distance? That is out of the question. Is miracle a reality, then? Or,—what?

This at any rate is a reality, that Jesus Christ, the wisest and best of men, who professed to be sent from God, believed that part of His commission was to work miracles, and joyfully welcomed devout confidence in these powers as a beginning of faith in God.

(b) Again, Christ worked a cure on a Gentile sufferer in a Gentile land (Matt. xv. 21 *sq. pars*). It was a time of rest for the Master, worn out by labour among His own people, to whom He was 'sent.' Christ hesitates to do what He is asked (ver. 24), like one meditating the matter with himself. But again He encounters remarkable 'faith,' and, with a burst of gladness, grants the mother's prayer (ver. 28). Again we see Christ rejoicing over great faith; and again it is displayed by a Gentile.

(c) We next find Jesus declaring, in view of the outward failure of His ministry, that the works which have been wasted upon Galilee would have sufficed to convert the most heathen cities—those whose names were a proverb for all uncleanness (Matt. xi. 20 *sq.* = Luke x. 13 *sq.*). We need not suppose that Christ's words are a literal revelation of Divine omniscience on the subject of different degrees of guilt, and on the different effects of different degrees of light. They are rather a strong rhetorical expression of the guilt of His neighbours, and an indication that His human mind is turning towards a less 'Gospel-hardened' audience.

(d) Again, we find Jesus' mind recurring to the few cases of Gentile proselytism or Gentile mission recorded in the Old Testament, and declaring that their converts—Gentile-born—will condemn, at the day of judgment, the unbelieving 'generation' which heard Him (Matt. xii. 41, 42 = Luke xi. 31, 32).

(e) We ought also to remember Christ's comparatively great success among the half-heathen Samaritans (John iv. 1-42; Luke xvii. 11 *sq.*).

(f) In view of all this, can we not understand the nature of the first answer given by Jesus, when, at his last passover, He was informed that 'certain Greeks' had expressed a wish to see Him? 'The hour is come,' He exclaimed, 'that the Son of Man should be glorified.' Yet, He added, only through death (John xii. 20 *sq.*).

(g) Hence, when Christ pronounced sentence of condem-

nation on the Jewish community, He habitually associated it with a promise of blessing to the Gentiles. If the vineyard is taken from its former dressers, it is given to 'a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof' (Matt. xxi. 43). If the invited guests fail at the marriage feast, the highways and hedges shall be scoured to fill up their vacant places (Matt. xxii. 9 = Luke xiv. 23). If 'the sons of the kingdom' are cast out, yet they come from the east and west, from the north and south, to join the patriarchs and prophets in the kingdom of God (Matt. viii. 11 = Luke xiii. 29). Even the tradition which (as we shall see) is more purely Jewish admits that, before the Second Advent can take place, the Gospel must somehow be brought before the minds of all nations (Matt. xxiv. 14 = Mark xiii. 9, 10). And, lest we should think this a late harmonistic insertion, we find the same statement far more boldly put in Jesus' words to Mary of Bethany (Matt. xxvi. 13 = Mark xiv. 9). The whole world is to be filled with Christ's gospel—to be filled also with the tidings of what a woman did for Christ. No one invented that pledge! And that extravagant pledge has been redeemed—these extravagant words have proved true. Once, for a friend's sake, Christ carries an appeal from contemporary prejudice *à la postérité*. Absurdly presumptuous as His assurance must have seemed at the time to any Roman historian or man of fashion who might have heard it, Christ has made it good. He has rewarded, even on this side death, with world-wide and age-long fame—with such fame as few can rival—the noble and beautiful deed which love inspired in a modest heart, the noble and beautiful deed which refreshed Christ on the way towards His awful mystery of suffering.

(h) We have Christ's attitude still more fully expressed in John x. Let us remember that, down to ver. 15, He is speaking exclusively of Israel. What then does He tell us? That trouble is coming—that He might possibly escape it by flight—but that flight would be hireling-like; that, if He can do nothing more for His flock, He can die for them (vv. 11-15).

Yet this is not His only flock. He has sheep elsewhere (ver. 16) for whom He must care hereafter when death is over, when He has 'laid down' His life and 'taken it again.' This Johannine *résumé* of Christ's thoughts shortly before the end fully harmonises with what we have already gathered, mainly from the Synoptics: a proof that genuine recollections lie at the basis of John's 'pneumatic' Gospel. It also seems to me that Christ's 'parable,' as St. John calls it, confirms the view that His death was not an *a priori* dogmatic necessity to the Master,—that He had to learn its necessity, as men learn sad lessons,—that He therefore turned the fact this way and that way, as men do, in order to gather fresh light upon it. Here Christ speaks of His death as befitting a faithful shepherd—only that thought finds expression here. But there is never any doubt or wavering as to the fact. The Son was never left without the inward assurance of the Father's will. 'This commandment have I received of my Father.' That keeps Christ always worthy of Himself—always separate and aloof from men, though, in all other points, He is like His brethren.

(4) The fourth effect of Christ's prediction of His death is that He removes His work as Judge to a *second coming*. This throws it into a somewhat remote background. It had been the first dogmatic certainty of His preaching, inherited from the Baptist. How it was to be worked in with the Gospel which Christ developed in His own teaching might be doubtful. Now that Christ throws it into a region beyond, He uses the old imagery without, as we may suppose, trying to convey to His hearers how much is literal fact and how much symbol (Matt. xix. 28 = Luke xxii. 28-30). I agree with Baldensperger that Christ began with His judgeship, and ended with it; but I do not believe that Christ's consciousness passed through stages of doubt in the meantime, or that the return to the notion of judgeship was an illusory and reactionary satisfaction of Christ's inherited dogmatic beliefs at the cost of His more personal and original moral instincts.

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(a) Nor do I believe, with Weiffenbach,¹ that Christ's vague prediction of a victory over death has been worked up by the evangelists—in the light partly, as Weiffenbach would admit, of objective visions of the risen Saviour—into two separate predictions of resurrection and of a Second Advent. For the two predictions have different motives. The resurrection is to prove Christ's triumph over death, and to equip His disciples for service (the Spirit is given by the *risen Jesus*), while the Advent is to take account with His servants. Christ bids men 'watch' for His advent; you cannot apply that to the resurrection! Besides, the promise of the Advent is an inherited religious category (as Baldensperger has well brought out) with which Christ must have been confronted all through His ministry, and which He cannot have repudiated, as, on Weiffenbach's theory, He must have done (cf. Matt. xxii. 41 *sq. pars*, xxvi. 64 *pars*).

(b) Nor again do I believe with B. Weiss, Baldensperger, and the tradition of the Synoptic Gospels, that (1) coincided in Christ's teaching with (2)—the Advent with the destruction of Jerusalem. I reject this chiefly because it does not leave room for (3),—the mission of the Gospel to the Gentiles. This question will give us some trouble. It will necessarily need a good deal of care, as it involves a correction of the Bible record.

First of all we may remark that, beyond all question, the prediction attributed by the Gospels to Christ has not been fulfilled. Let people talk of infallibility as they will, there has been a mistake somewhere. We need not here argue against the attempts to put another colour upon such an assertion as that of Matt. xxiv. 29, 35. These are exegetical subterfuges, which can satisfy no honest and diligent inquirer. It is not as if the text lacked confirmation. Mark (xiii. 24) and Luke (xxi. 28, 32) tone down the expression, but do not materially alter the gist of the prophecy. It is not as if the passage were isolated. The same expectation appears in Matt. x. 23; Christ's

¹ *Wiederkunftsgedanke Jesu.*

second coming is close at hand, and is intimately bound up with the course of the Gospel in Israel. Here the record of the First Gospel is not confirmed by the other Synoptics. But in a third passage—Matt. xvi. 28—both the other witnesses fall in with Matthew's Gospel. Again, as in the case from which we started, they modify the expression; but substantially they agree that Jesus Christ asserted some of His disciples should live to see the Second Advent (Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27). This was evidently a widely diffused and firmly rooted belief in the early Church, and it was thought to rest upon several distinct and categorical assertions by Jesus. In the appendix to John's Gospel (xxi.) we find traces of the same belief modified to suit the new circumstances. Now that Jerusalem has been long destroyed, all that continues to be maintained is that one disciple at any rate—St. John—shall live to see the Advent. And the writer's intention is to prove that Christ had not made any such explicit assertion (ver. 23), at least on the occasion on which he supposes the tradition to rest.

Yet, clear and unqualified as the Synoptic testimony appears, there has been a mistake somewhere. Jerusalem has fallen eighteen hundred years ago; the Lord has not returned; generations of the saints have bowed submissively before 'the last enemy.'

Now it will not do to say off-hand that, Christ being infallible, the record must be at fault. That solution—though I believe it is true almost to demonstration—will itself offend many minds. And, on the other hand, we must not lay down with too much confidence *a priori* what things were possible and what were impossible for Christ during His humiliation. Errors due to ignorance, in matters not affecting His moral purity or the direct necessities of His mission, He may—He must—have committed. Or, if any one hesitates to allow this, yet he must see that we cannot take the opposite for granted in apologetic or critical discussions.

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But while this is true we have much to make us hesitate in accepting the prediction here ascribed to Christ. Did He go out of His way to pledge His prophetic or Messianic foreknowledge precisely at this one unfortunate point where He was in error? Why should Christ lay such stress upon a date? That the early Christian Church, hungry for the Master's return, should twist and strain His words into confirmation of their wishes, that we could well understand; but why should Christ forestall their wishes? And does the no less solemn assurance which immediately follows merely signify that *day* and *hour* were a secret with God the Father, though the *generation* within which the Advent was to fall was known to Christ, and to His pupils, and to all readers or hearers of the Gospel? The evangelist no doubt thinks so. It was important with him to keep the Church in that attitude of watchful uncertainty which Christ had commanded them. Hence he faces the improbability involved in recording both traditions. But to a calm judgment it does not seem likely that Christ would have used such extraordinarily strong expressions as to the uncertainty of the time of His return, if He had also, and in the same breath, used extraordinarily strong expressions as to the certainty of His returning within the lifetime of some of His contemporaries.

And, when we look closely at the texts which pledge Him to a speedy return, we discover strong internal grounds for distrusting them.

Matt. x. 23 rests upon an extremely curious combination. Obviously the verse belongs to a late period in Christ's biography, though it is topically grouped, after the manner of the First Gospel, along with the earliest instructions addressed to the Twelve. It implies then that the mission of Christ's apostles, even after His resurrection, is to be confined to Israel. It implies that their witness-bearing in the presence of Gentiles (ver. 18) is only to take place when they are brought to trial by their enemies. This is a Jewish illusion, contradicting a whole mass of Gospel testimony.

Christ cannot have issued instructions involving such pre-suppositions as these.

Matt. xvi. 28 and parallels dislocates the connection of thought. Christ is giving a lesson on the cross—on His own cross, and on the cross that must be borne by His followers. He drives the lesson home by reminding the disciples of their responsibility during the time of probation; He tells them that His office as judge is only postponed, not abandoned. But what says the interpolation? Not that 'the judge standeth before the doors,' but that the kingdom of God—the transfigured glorified kingdom for which Jewish minds so strongly yearned—should come within a generation; that, although *some* might follow Christ to death, *all* should not. Whereas Christ says elsewhere, 'My cup indeed ye shall drink' (Matt. xx. 23 = Mark x. 39).

Finally, in Matt. xxiv. *pars*, we may perhaps find a clue to this whole mode of thought. The presupposition of this prophecy is that the destruction of Jerusalem—the last judgment of the Jewish state—coincides with the last judgment of the whole world, and with the second coming of Christ. Here, first, we again notice the confinement of the prophetic programme to the fortunes of the Gospel among the Jews; whereas elsewhere Christ looks towards the Gentiles in the event of His message failing to win the Jews. It follows, secondly, that in Matt. xxiv. the Gospel ceases to be good tidings, and becomes almost exclusively a message of judgment. And this is what, above everything else, makes it impossible for us to believe that Jesus spoke the prophecy as we have it. The great moral teacher, who held back from forcing His claims on men in order that His persuasions might slowly win their hearts—the dying Saviour, who looked forward through His sufferings to the redemption of 'many'—passes out of sight here; we have only left the figure of a Judge, who hurries to an end the world's history in order to give glory to a few 'elect.' Jesus Christ, the great interpreter of the Old Testament, could not possibly believe that *this* was

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its fulfilment, that God had prepared the way during many generations in order, finally, to arrive at this end. There is nothing of the spirit of the Lord's Prayer in this programme. Such a passage as Luke xvii. 22-37 is, for the most part, the merest Jewish eschatology—a dead body without a soul. It is curious to see, in this passage, two traditions laid alongside each other. According to one, Christ warned His disciples against false Christs by reminding them that the kingdom of heaven was already among them (ver. 21). According to the other tradition, He told them that His own coming would contrast with that of the false Christs in being abrupt and unmistakable (ver. 24).

We conclude that Christ really left behind Him a different prophetic programme. He announced the certain and speedy fall of the Jewish State. But he indicated—in veiled form, till after the resurrection—that His Gospel should have a career among the Gentiles. And, in the background, He announced His ultimate return as Judge—not daring to fix day or hour for that event.

In describing His return, Jesus no doubt made use of current apocalyptic imagery, based on the Old Testament. We certainly cannot demand that, whatever His feeling of the necessity for moral development, Christ should have postulated many centuries for the life of His Church. No *a priori* reasoning could decide *how* long the moral process must last; certainly, *a priori*, the oscillations of Christian history could neither be foreseen nor desired. But to suppose that He definitely restricted the history of the kingdom of God to a single generation—that He definitely fixed the unknown day and hour within the lifetime of some of the apostles—that He placed the goal of the entire movement in a *dies irae*—seems absolutely impossible.

If there was any error in Christ's forecast, it probably led Him to place the judgment on Israel too near His own time. He assigned it to 'that generation' (Matt. xxiii. 34-36 = Luke xi. 49-51; cf. Matt. xxiv. 34, and parallels); really it took place

about forty years afterwards. And, while the angel of judgment lingered, the apostles worked chiefly in Israel. This was in itself natural and right. Nevertheless, it led to their construing their Master's words entirely from the point of view of the Church at Jerusalem, and of its private fortunes. They early conceived the hope that the gospel of the resurrection would lead to the repentance of Israel (Acts iii. 19 *sq.*), that the sign of Jonah was to be blessed to their countrymen (Matt. xii. 40). Christ's own words at the close of Matt. xxiii., 'Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord,' do not seem to have any other meaning than that, if Israel did repent, His Second Advent, in spite of the predictions of judgment which He had just given, might be a scene of joy, and might be the goal of perfect redemption. A millennial reign would have been not unworthy of Christ, if it had simply meant that repentant Israel was to be allowed one other opportunity of carrying out its mission as the interpreter of Christ to the world. This became the habitual expectation of the Jewish Christians. And, if we blame them for it, it is only because they adhered to it too rigidly when Providence was teaching a different lesson.

Christ had told His disciples that the time of His return to the world was a secret. But He had not told them that any prophetic landmark necessarily preceded it. And He had bidden them live in an attitude of continual readiness. Hence it was natural that the Advent should be expected in the immediate future—all the more natural if Christians hoped that Israel's repentance was to make Christ's return a time of blessing—more natural still if the kingdom of glory satisfied the superficial instincts of Jewish piety as the gospel of the cross failed to do.

But time passed, and it grew manifest that Israel was not repentant, but, for the most part, was running headlong to ruin. Yet it did not now occur to Jewish Christians that the gospel might find a career elsewhere in the Gentile world. They

retained their strong persuasion that the end of all things was at hand. Only, their minds reverted to Christ's predictions of judgment on Jerusalem, and made these synchronise with His prediction of the Second Advent. The disciples' question, as given in Matt. xxiv. 3, is significant: they take for granted that the destruction of Jerusalem coincides with the Lord's return and the end of the world; under this presupposition they interrogate their Master; in the light of it they prejudge His reply. That, I take it, is exactly how things came about. Having identified the gospel's destiny with its destiny inside of Israel, they took for granted that judgment on Israel meant the last judgment on the whole world—all the more confidently because Jesus had Himself predicted that Israel should be visited with speedy judgment in punishment for its unbelief, and because they had long been taking for granted that the Second Advent was close at hand. Hence tradition transferred Christ's prediction of judgment on Israel *within a generation* (Matt. xxiii.; Luke xi.) to His prediction of judgment upon the world (xvi. 27, etc.). And thus the Synoptic eschatology loses its gospel character, and speaks to us only of the world's destruction.

In order to be completely satisfactory, this theory ought no doubt to be applied verse by verse to the relevant passages. But for such labour there is neither scope in the present essay, nor talent in the present writer. And, as it stands, the argument is, I think, so far, clear and convincing.

There may be those who question whether God's providence could allow the very words of Jesus to be misconceived during their transmission by the early Church, before they were reduced to writing. It is strange; but it seems absolutely plain, as we have seen, that there was a mistake somewhere; and everything makes it likely that the mistake was committed, not by Jesus, but by the Church of Jerusalem. In point of fact, these predictions have misled no one since Jerusalem fell. The chapter has been a sealed part of Scripture to the devotional student. Providence has made it impossible

for the student to believe what the passage literally affirms. If it has not been profitable, it has not proved noxious.

It is in a different part of the New Testament that devout superstition has found congenial browsing ground. The Apocalypse of St. John has been made the victim of Christian cabbalism ; it has furnished support to theories equally removed from its proper sense, and from the dictates of common reason and Christian principle. Nor has God interposed to hinder that. In fact, I do not find that God's providence is wont to interpose between pious fools and the natural consequences of folly. However, if bad exegesis of the Apocalypse proved a bane to the Church, after the literal meaning of the book had been refuted by history, bad exegesis of the Apocalypse also produced antidotes. The prevailing catholic interpretation of the Millennium explained it as referring to the whole Christian era ; whence the popular fancy that the end of the world should come in A.D. 1000. The prevailing Protestant interpretation of the Millennium took it of a special period of a thousand years, but spiritualised away the literal reign of Christ on the earth, and threw the thousand years into the future, interposing them as a historical barrier between the Church of the present and the Second Advent. Thus, through bad exegesis of a Millenarian manifesto, both Patristic and Protestant thought worked its way back to the standpoint of the Lord's Prayer and of the parables of the kingdom. By an almost humorous arrangement of Providence, the most catastrophic book in the New Testament was made to teach the doctrines of slow growth and moral development.

C. We must here still further interrupt our study of Christ's teaching in regard to His work of salvation in order that we may state briefly what is Christ's doctrine of the penal suffering and heavenly joys of the unseen world. Though this topic is intimately connected with what we have been reviewing, yet it is even more intimately connected with earlier representations

of heaven and hell. Christ often speaks of His salvation as a marriage feast: this is a traditional Messianic symbol: so too in all probability is the representation of the punishment of those who are shut out in the cold and darkness (Matt. viii. 12; xxv. 10, 30). But at other times Christ speaks of punishment not as privation, but as positive infliction of penalty, in the fire of Gehenna. Originally that picture (Isa. lxvi. 24) is taken from the heaps of refuse and rubbish in the accursed valley which had been desecrated by the cruel worship of false gods, where the worm of corruption and the smouldering fire carried on their ceaseless work. But unquestionably the Jews had already understood the scene of punishment as a very 'furnace of fire.' Christ adopts this picture also (Matt. v. 22, 29, 30, x. 28, xviii. 9, xxiii. 33, one parallel in Mark and one in Luke); but it enters into no definite connection with His work, except that He is to be the judge, and that sentence upon His enemies is to be 'the judgment of Gehenna.' A third form of representation treats the penalty of sin as imprisonment (Matt. v. 25, 26 = Luke xii. 58, 59, xviii. 30, 34), with 'torment'—or, in our modern language, 'hard labour.' Christ's first work as a teacher of judgment is to quicken men's sense of sin. As in all His doctrine, He begins here at the conscience. Therefore, over against the immoral casuistry of the Pharisees, He sets the truth, that every sin tends to hurry a man towards total ruin in hell (Matt. v. 22, 29 *sq.*). Especially He warns men against sinful and lustful pleasures—telling us that it is better to lead a maimed and mutilated life, if that is our only way of escape, than to peril the loss of life itself, of soul and body, by trifling with temptation (Mark ix. 43—twice in Matthew). Christ does not literally mean that we are to mutilate our persons; neither can He literally mean that the bodies of sinners are to be burned with physical fire. Yet He does mean to tell us that sin is utterly evil, and that its penalty is total destruction.

The final penalty is threatened by Christ chiefly for definite sin between man and man. His judgment, He always tells us,

will be according to our works (Matt. xvi. 27, xxv. 14 *sq.*, 31 *sq.*; Luke xii. 47, 48, etc.). No profession of faith will then avail to excuse an unholy life (Matt. vii. 21 *sq.* = Luke xiii. 25 *sq.*). In the great vision of the Judgment of the Nations, like a bas-relief in marble, the two groups of the saved and lost are composed respectively of the merciful and of the selfish (Matt. xxv. 31 *sq.*). Unforgiveness on the part of a citizen of God's kingdom forfeits God's forgiveness and condemns the Christian himself to imprisonment, accompanied apparently by torture (Matt. vi. 15, xviii. 35). If anything can make such a sin more grievous in Christ's sight, the hypocritical profession of religion does so. This was what roused His deep anger against the religious world of His day (Matt. xxiii. esp. v. 23). The rich man of the parable (Luke xvi. 19 *sq.*) has been guilty of this sin. Flippantly though the charge of hypocrisy is thrown about, it is plain that nothing can be more deadening to the very springs of moral life than the deliberate profession of piety as a cloak for cruel or immoral practices. Such conduct is of the nature of a soul-destructive 'sin against the Holy Ghost' (Matt. xii. 31 *par.*).—The details of that passage are hard to interpret. Apparently Christ is rebuking a wilful and malignant denial of His Divine mission (ver. 24). And perhaps we shall best understand these words as reminding us that we cannot sin with limited liability, and that some sins very specially tend toward that state of final obduracy in which repentance is impossible.

The doctrine of unpardonable sin is the strongest of all Christ's announcements of a definitive penalty for sin. Elsewhere His language seems to vary. When He speaks of the fire of Gehenna, He gives no hint that those condemned to it may ever escape again: the fire is unquenchable; the worm undying. And in Matt. xxv. we have the expression 'eternal punishment' correlated with 'eternal life.' On the other hand, where the punishment of sin is described as imprisonment, language is used more than once which seems to imply that the penalty is finite (Matt. v. 26 = Luke xii. 59; xviii. 34).

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Even the doctrine of unpardonable sin implies that there is pardon for some sins in the life to come. And, when Christ speaks of unwatchful servants, He uses language which it would be very difficult to fit into the accepted scheme of the future life. The words are so important that we must quote them in full: 'That servant, which knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with *many stripes*; but he that knew not, and did things *worthy* of stripes, shall be beaten with *few stripes*' (Luke xii. 47, 48). Do not these words indicate that exact merciful justice for which our hearts cry out? They give no countenance to the idea that men are to be condemned wholesale to uniform misery.

Up to this point we might summarise what we have learned, by saying that some of Christ's language seems to speak of a limited punishment, but that we have found no trace of the idea of salvation, or admission to the blessedness of the saved, after this life. And yet, can these hints of a larger hope be interpreted as meaning that after a season, the lost, or some of them, shall be annihilated? We can hardly read that meaning into the words. Christ's language suggests that the prisoner shall 'come out' of prison—that the unworthy servant, after 'many stripes' or 'few stripes,' shall—not be done to death, but—perchance have the renewed offer of his master's favour. And the most solemn text of all, by telling us that one sin cannot be forgiven, 'neither in this world, nor in that which is to come,' surely implies that some sin is to be forgiven in the world to come.

On the other hand, Christ undoubtedly teaches that some sinners will, in some sense, be anxious to enter into salvation, and not be able (Luke xiii. 24; Matt. xxv. 11).

In the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Christ takes up the representations of reward and punishment, which He elsewhere annexes to the coming judgment, and transfers them to the moment after death. A similar hope of reward for the redeemed is conveyed to us in the promise to the penitent

thief (Luke xxiii. 43). The parable of Lazarus uses the image of a feast. This is common in Christ's teaching. But His doctrine of the Resurrection (Matt. xxii. 30, *par.*) forbids us to think of a literal sensuous banquet. This doctrine shows us too that Christ did not admit the possibility of at least any earthly or carnal form of millenarianism. And it teaches us that the 'new wine of the kingdom of God,' spoken of in Matt. xxvi. 29 parallels, is also a symbol of the ineffable gladness of heaven. Christ's words to the disciples do not 'tryst' them to a renewal of their old earthly fellowship. They rise up from Christ's full heart to tell His chosen friends that the old earthly fellowship in its familiar form is at an end—that death, the great separator, has so much power even over the Redeemer and His redeemed.

D. We now return to Jesus Christ's statements about His own destiny. During the last day at Jerusalem, we are told by all the Synoptics, He put the question to some of the Pharisees, 'What think ye of the Christ? whose son is He?' If they had answered quite straightforwardly they would probably have answered, 'The Son of God.' For that title (Matt. xxvi. 63 parallels; John xix. 7) was their favourite appellation for the Coming One. And, if they had so answered, Christ could easily have conveyed to the minds of His disciples and of the multitude the thought which was in His heart. He could easily have suggested that 'the Son of God' must not be expected to conform to the literal pattern of 'a son of David,' but must, so far as He differed from an earthly monarch, be intrinsically greater. However, it was the Pharisees' cue to give the people to understand what a very poor Messiah Jesus of Nazareth would make. Hence their question about the tribute-money. In answering it, Jesus had in effect said publicly what He said to Pilate privately, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' Perhaps this saying had told against Jesus with the mob: and the Pharisees think they will push their advantage by replying, 'Who is the Christ? why, He is the

Son of David'—as much as to say, A very different person from you. But it was not easy to gain an advantage over this Jesus. Whether or not He had expected the answer they gave—whether or not He had wished it—He had a Scripture quotation in reserve for this very answer. The Book of Psalms was regarded on all hands as being mainly of Davidic authorship; and tradition had explicitly assigned No. cx. to the royal singer. How then, asks Jesus, can David speak of Messiah—if He be David's son—as 'his Lord,' and how can he describe Messiah's royalty in terms of such supernatural greatness, as is involved in a seat at God's right hand? That, He hints, is the nature of His own kingship. He refuses to resemble David in external things, not because He is less than David, but because He is incomparably greater. His leaving the world, even though He submits to the cross, is really a coronation, an accession to the fulness of His royalty.

This quotation had a great career in the early Church. St. Peter, at Pentecost, combined it with an immortality Psalm (xvi.), which he interpreted as a direct prediction of Christ's resurrection. The Messiah, seated at God's right hand 'till the Lord make His enemies the footstool of His feet,' has not been 'left in Hades,' or 'given to see corruption,' but is made 'full of gladness with God's countenance,' and at His 'right hand' finds 'pleasure for evermore.' It is true our text of Acts ii. does not make St. Peter quote the last clause of Ps. xvi.; but surely that clause constitutes too valuable a link with Ps. cx. to have been overlooked by him; and in his Epistle (1 Peter iii. 22) he unquestionably refers to this prophetic Psalm in describing Christ's exaltation. Again, St. Paul takes up the quotation. From the truth, that 'He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet,' St. Paul infers that the resurrection of the dead, Christ's triumph over 'the last enemy,' will usher in 'the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father' (1 Cor. xv. 24 sq.). Elsewhere (Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1), he refers more fully to the character of Christ's reign; and in Rom. viii. 34 adds

the thought, that Jesus Christ, as a priestly king, uses His position at God's right hand to make intercession for us (cf. Isa. liii. 12). Perhaps, also, his doctrine of Christ's humiliation and exaltation (Phil. ii.) is partly based on the same text. With the author to the Hebrews, the value of the Psalm as a proof-text for Christ's exaltation and glory (i. 3, viii. 1, x. 12, xii. 2) is very marked; and he again emphasises (vii. 25) the thought of Christ's intercession. Finally, we might, perhaps, connect with this text the representation in the Apocalypse (v. 1 *sq.*) that the slain Lamb, and He alone, is worthy to take the book of destiny out of the right hand of Him that sitteth on the throne. In other words: the Psalm, which Christ had laid hold of, was a great help to His disciples when they had to learn to think of Him in His Divine glory.

But perhaps it may be objected, that Christ's use of the phrase emphasises nothing more than the fact that the Messianic King is Lord of David. Yet surely that thought, so wonderful to a Jew,¹ cannot be kept apart from the further description of the Messianic King, as one seated at God's right hand. And, in Jesus's reply (Matt. xxvi. 64, *pars.*) to the adjuration of the high priest, we find that He, as we might almost say, goes out of His way to refer to Ps. cx., 'I am the Son of God; but'—for a last warning—'I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' The expression seems to be a zeugma: Henceforth you shall have cause to know that the Son of Man is at God's right hand; and you shall one day see Him coming in the clouds. This twofold prophecy is vouched for more or less by each of the three Synoptics. A merely apocalyptic doctrine would have been, '*Hereafter* ye shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds.' The title Son of Man in all three Gospels, and the quotation from Daniel, vouched for by Matthew and Mark, contain Christ's eschatology. He plainly gives His enemies to

¹ Weber quotes a characteristic piece of rabbinical profanity regarding Abraham's jealousy of the Messiah, p. 342.

understand, that He is to be judge at the last day; but, along with this, He works in a reference to His place as 'Lord' seated 'at the right hand of power.' Thus, when Christ went to His death, He looked forward not to a millenarian reign, but to what theologians have come to term 'mediatorial sovereignty.' Beyond that, He places the last judgment; the concluding scene in the revealed programme of the world's history. But Christ thinks it important to name, along with and before the last judgment, His reign from heaven over the history of the world.

May we also quote in this connection Christ's words to the penitent robber? It is not a future glory in this world, but an immediately impending glory in a better world, of which Christ promises him a share. 'To-day,' He says, 'thou shalt be with me in Paradise' (Luke xxiii. 43).

And, after His resurrection, all our authorities—Matthew, Luke, John; Mark *deest*—agree in telling us that Jesus renewed to the disciples the promise of the Holy Spirit. That is involved in the command to 'baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, *and of the Holy Ghost.*' For, since the days of John the Baptizer, baptism with water was understood as a symbol or pledge of the Messianic outpouring of the Holy Spirit. (Cf. Matt. xxviii. 19; Luke xxiv. 49; John xx. 22; Acts i. 5, 8.)

Hence, even if we do not press the words which affirm that the risen Lord in person gave His disciples commandment to go to the Gentiles, He turned their thoughts, not to a future compensation in a millennial age for the troubles they should have to bear, but to the present indwelling of His Spirit—a gift which implicitly separated the Church of the New Covenant from that of the Old.

VIII.

In spite of the predictions of destruction which He had launched against unbelieving Israel, it was the will of the risen Christ that His Gospel should first be published at Jerusalem

(Luke xxiv. 47). For God's will is not a fate, but a conscious, flexible purpose. God is moral through and through; 'the Lord is righteous in all His ways.' Long before the parable of the potter and the clay was used by St. Paul to teach a crushing doctrine of Divine sovereignty, it had been used by the prophet Jeremiah to teach the very opposite doctrine. 'Behold, as clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them' (xviii. 6-8). The clay is still in the hand of the righteous Master and Lord of all; if, at the eleventh hour, He sees cause to change the purpose which is already half executed, He will change it—and will verify His own unchangeableness by doing so. For He is 'to the merciful, merciful, to the upright upright; pure to the pure, but froward to the froward.' We are not puppets, going through destined parts in a stage-play, will we, nill we. We are subjects of a righteous moral government. This is the presupposition of all grace on God's part towards men.

Nevertheless the moral destiny of Israel as a whole was not to be changed even by the message of forgiveness from the risen Saviour. Individuals were to be saved; and, since communities are composed of individuals, the work of the apostles at Jerusalem was justified by the kind of its results, if not altogether by their amount. Still, Jewish converts to the apostolic Church seem to have been mainly pilgrims from the Dispersion. Israel persisted in those sad moral traits which had drawn forth Christ's condemnation; and His sentence, though delayed, was finally executed.

The greater part of our New Testament falls into the period before the destruction of Jerusalem. In other words, it falls into a period of strained eschatological expectations: for the destruction of Jerusalem, without a personal advent, was God's final reply to the feverish prayers of the Christian Church—a

reply conditioned, no doubt, by the special circumstances of the Church and world, yet, as we may hold, one expressing the inner mind of God, as it also harmonises with the central portions of Christ's teaching. Meantime, the ethical contents of the Gospel had been hard pushed by its eschatological hopes. The two are not necessarily inconsistent. Yet there is risk in believing that the world is almost at an end, and that every true Christian is on the eve of being rapt into a state of glory—visibly triumphant over all his critics, and enemies, and oppressors. That is not a belief very suitable 'for such a being as man is, in such a world as the present.' We may provisionally define the New Testament literature as the record of the process by which the ethical faith of Christ's Gospel maintained its ground against this particular danger, and gradually worked its way back towards the mind of Christ.

We may group the New Testament writings into classes by their attitude towards what we call broadly the doctrine of Antichrist. In our Lord's own teaching, we may say that impenitent Israel was the antichristian force. But in apostolic times the doctrine of Antichrist is one form—not the only form—of conceiving Christianity as a drama rather than as a redemption—of conceiving its victory as one gained at the expense of human enemies, rather than as a victory which includes the salvation of its enemies.

The first group of New Testament writings—Peter (early speeches of Acts, 1 Peter), James, and Hebrews—are Jewish-Christian writings dominated by the hope of Israel's conversion, or, at any rate, confining their outlook to Israel. Here there is no Antichrist. Unbelieving Israel is struck out of the prophetic picture of the future, and nothing has taken its place. But the Lord's return—whether in judgment only to the outlying world, or in mercy as well as in judgment—is looked for with strained expectation and earnest hope.

Our second group of writings is the main body of the Pauline epistles—Thessalonians, the 'principal epistles' (chiefly two), and the 'captivity' epistles (three out of four).—Without

definitely passing sentence of spuriousness on the Pastorals, we observe that they group themselves elsewhere.—Here, in the first instance, unbelieving Israel is antichrist (1 and 2 Thess.). But, when St. Paul works out his doctrinal positions further (Gal., Rom.), he opens up a historical perspective (Rom. xi.), instead of an eschatological drama, and the doctrine of antichrist disappears from his writings; though he still expects the Parousia in the immediate future, and only gradually learns the truth that he is not himself to welcome Christ in the flesh.

In the third place; the Apocalypse stands by itself in recognising persecuting Rome as the antichrist. Hence its attitude towards the Gentile world as such—Gentile Christians apart—is almost exclusively hostile. And its dramatic outline of coming events is certainly more Jewish than Christian. But we must group the Aramaic gospel of Matthew along with the Apocalypse, as having taken shape just before the fall of Jerusalem.¹ In that Gospel—as we still read in our own Matthew—the nearer enemy, unbelieving Judaism, is the antichrist.

Fourthly; the Epistles to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse already refer to a different antichristian force—libertinism as a heresy within the Church. This is the antichrist of Jude, with its dependent document, 2 Peter—perhaps of the Pastoral Epistles—and of 1 and 2 John. According to the established eschatological scheme, antichrist's presence denotes that Christ will soon be present. But, in these writings, the expectation of the Advent sounds like an echo rather than like an original note—unless, perhaps, in Jude.

Finally, we have the writings which have simply a historical outlook towards the career of the Christian Church—(Romans), Matthew, Luke, Acts, (Pastorals?), (1 John), and the Fourth Gospel.

We have not classed Mark's Gospel here at all. It is short, objective, more directly historical, or less doctrinal, than most of the New Testament writings; and its original conclusion

¹ See above, p. 275.

has not come down to us. Nor do two private letters, Philemon and 3 John, happen to contain anything bearing on our inquiry.

A. (a.) It is noteworthy that the document from which St. Luke has drawn in compiling the early chapters of Acts is definitely Millenarian. It assumes—just as Matt. xxiv. 3 assumes certain determinant points of view—so it assumes that, sooner or later (Acts i. 7) ‘the kingdom’ is to be restored to Israel (*ib.* 6). And this is the point of view in the apostle Peter’s speeches. His speech on the day of Pentecost is, indeed, taken up with confirming the news of the Lord’s resurrection by proof-texts from the Old Testament such as Jesus Himself had found there, and with calling the nation to repentance. But, once the tide of conversions began to set in, the apostle felt enabled to treat the crucifixion as a sin of ignorance (iii. 17), and therefore, according to the legal institutions of the Old Testament, as capable of pardon; the apostle felt enabled (19-21) to promise the return of Jesus as a ‘season of refreshing’—a ‘restoration,’ or perhaps ‘a fulfilment’¹ of all the prophetic promises. ‘Unto you *first*,’ he adds, God has sent the message of His risen servant Jesus.

This not ignoble Millenarianism—rooted in the hope of Israel’s conversion—probably represents the earliest attitude of belief in the Church after Pentecost. We shall see later how differently St. Luke conceives of the history in retrospect.

(b.) In 1 Peter we have the same point of view. I follow Weiss in regarding this epistle as addressed by the leading member of the apostolic college to ‘elect’ (*i.e.* converted or Christian) members of the Jewish diaspora in Asia Minor (i. 1), with a view to assuring these scattered congregations (ver. 12) that the message which has reached them, and which has rescued them from their previous conformity to the heathenism around them (ii. 9, 10), is (ver. 12) the true gospel of the grace of God in Christ. Now, ‘the day of visitation’ here (ii. 12)

¹ So Cremer (*Lexicon*).

can hardly be anything else than Christ's millennial reign. It is then that St. Peter expects the Gentiles shall be called into the fellowship of gospel blessings. Meantime he conceives of the work of Christ as an inner Jewish affair; and, though we do not hear of his prosecuting mission-work among his unbelieving fellow-countrymen, his epistle shows him to have been a true and tender shepherd of the flock of God. Aggression is not the only duty of Christian preachers; they must also see that what has been gained is kept and edified. Christ had chosen vacillating Peter as 'a rock' for the building of His Church; and we can see that his influence must have greatly 'strengthened his brethren' in the faith of the gospel.

St. Peter has been called the apostle of hope. That is true, although it is also true that the whole Church was, at first, filled with the same spirit of earnest longing for the presence of the Master whom they loved. But let us notice that with hope goes patience. Patience is the moral element in St. Peter's gospel. 'After they have suffered for a while' (v. 10, cf. 12, iii. 14, iv. 12) he promises his readers eternal salvation. Thus the thought of Christ's example (ii. 21, iii. 18, iv. 13) stands out before them clearer and more glorious. If the first disciples were over-hasty in wishing for Christ's return, God gave them a better and more spiritual boon when He called them to the fellowship of Christ's obedience and of His sufferings. The doctrine of resignation, or of patience, is brought out in the epistle in close dependence on the doctrine of Christ's work. While this is so, the expectation that 'the end of all things is at hand,' that 'the time is come for judgment to begin,' appears again and again (iv. 7, 17).

There is one more point to notice in this epistle—St. Peter's doctrine of Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison. The passage is obscure and intricate. Perhaps some of the copious Jewish apocryphal literature, which has perished, would have been our best commentator. We know that Noah figured in that fantastic elaboration of Old Testament material. As it is, we can see that St. Peter treats the flood as a parable both

of judgment and of mercy. It overwhelmed those who, in spite of God's longsuffering, continued disobedient. It saved the righteous few from the world of filth and blasphemy in which they had lived—even as baptism (namely, the good profession of a Christian's faith) cleanses the soul from its former sin, and brings a man into a new life of communion with the risen Christ.—But all this is by the way. And the points which concern us are, I think, really plain enough. Christ preached the gospel to the dead while He Himself abode under the power of death; and He preached for their salvation,—in order that, while 'judged according to men in the flesh,' they might 'live according to God in the spirit' (iv. 6). Thus the bare facts of Christ's death and subsequent resurrection are made by the apostle to support a 'larger hope' than those admit who insist on confining the gospel to the living. And thus a very beautiful and effectual answer is given by anticipation to one of the sneers of modern unbelief. Was Christ really, we are asked, 'from Friday to Sunday naked in the abyss in Sheol, as a dead being among the dead'?¹ He was not dead, we reply, but quickened. 'He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.' We may not indeed feel certain that what we are here told is literal fact. Christ's revelations in His new covenant are addressed to us, living men in this world. Of what happens in the regions that lie beyond time and death we receive pictures, symbols, hints, sacred and satisfying promises; but the mysterious reality 'doth not yet appear.' Even the fact of Jesus Christ's stay in the abode of disembodied souls (so to call it) is, it seems to me, primarily a revelation to the living. If we describe that revelation by affirming that Christ did or experienced certain things, we say, like the apostle, that He preached to the spirits in prison. If we express the facts in coldly calculated scientific language, they are these—that, Christ having visited, not only the world of the living, but the world of the dead, there is necessarily hope not only for the living but for the dead; that He has

¹ Holsten, *Zum Evangelium des Paulus u. des Petrus*, p. 128.

given both worlds the consecration of His presence ; and that—however far it may go—whatever its ultimate issues may be—and by whatever means it may operate—His gospel must include both worlds in its message of mercy and hope.

(c) The Epistle of James is of interest as being inscribed to the whole Jewish diaspora, converted and unconverted (i. 1). This indicates the author's earnest longing and keen hope that his whole race might yet be won to Christ. For the epistle itself is addressed to Christians, children of 'the Father' (iii. 9), worshippers of 'the Lord of glory' (ii. 1). What he sought to do for the diaspora by a letter, St. James sought to do for Jerusalem and the Holy Land by his whole life. The missionary element towards Israel, which we missed in St. Peter, burns in the heart of St. James, although, of course, only towards Israel (cf. Acts xv. 13 *sq.*, xxi. 18 *sq.* ; Gal. ii. 12). Does he refer to a millenarian work among Gentiles when he calls his own communion 'a kind of first-fruits of God's creatures'? (i. 18) Tradition tells us that before the crash of the Roman conquest came, James had given his life as a martyr.

In his epistle, it is the life of obedience—of Christian service—which is dwelt on with characteristic sternness and solemnity, and with moving sincerity. The 'wisdom' of God dwells in man (i. 5, iii. 13 *sq.*); the word of God begets a new life which 'saves the soul' (i. 21). And, though not referring to Christ as the example of patience, the epistle is full of Christian triumph over sorrow and suffering (i. 2, 12, v. 11). But, while thus profoundly religious in his morality, it is true that St. James does not find any place for Christ in his intellectual scheme of doctrine except as lawgiver and judge. Hence his feeling is all the stronger that 'the coming of the Lord is at hand,'—that 'the judge standeth before the doors.' There is no levity in his doctrine of the Second Advent. Humbly bending before the judge, he barely mentions 'the kingdom' and 'crown of life,' which God has promised to them that love Him (i. 12, ii. 5).

(d) The Epistle to the Hebrews is, both intellectually and spiritually, one of the masterpieces of the New Testament. It is addressed to Christians (vi. 1) of unmixed Hebrew race (ii. 16 *et passim*), who have been in the habit of observing the Mosaic law, and who, partly under stress of outward trial (x. 32 *sq.*, xii. 3 *sq.*), partly in weariness at the Lord's delaying His coming (x. 37, xii. 3), partly from sheer want of intelligence (v. 11 *sq.*), are in danger of giving up their Christian profession and of falling back upon Judaism (vi. 6, vii. 18, xiii. 13). This disposition had been strengthened by a recent movement among them (xiii. 9 *sq.*) which, without denying Christ—for the author does not fulminate against it as he does against those who lapse from the gospel—yet tended to lead men towards the denial of Christ by giving them new reasons for valuing the Mosaic law. What these reasons may have been we cannot tell. Perhaps they exaggerated the value of the law as a bond of nationality, and as one instituted by God. Our author meets the double danger by a theory of typology, according to which—if we may put his views into modern English—Old Testament religion was always trying by repeated sacrifices to give peace to the conscience, but without success, so that the only thing it really guaranteed to a worshipper was fellowship in the outward life of citizenship in Israel. The statement of his theory is complicated by the fact that he identifies spiritual religion not merely with the New Testament dispensation as such, but with the Platonic or Alexandrian ideal world of archetypal realities. In dealing with Jews, his theory had the advantage over St. Paul's theory, of the letter and spirit, not only in that it conceded more to the Old Testament religion by making it a type, or shadowy representation, of true religion, but in that it was substantially nearer the truth. Both St. Paul and the author to the Hebrews, if you keep them to the letter of their theories, deny that the law ever satisfactorily performed positive religious functions in the case of any soul. St. Paul makes the religious life of Old Testament believers a purely private

affair, standing in no relation to the works of the law which they were publicly bound to perform—by which, he says, they could never be justified, only condemned. The author to the Hebrews makes the religious life of Old Testament believers a constant beginning of communion with God which came to an abrupt end before it reached its goal. This is extravagant. The law was a joy, and not an occasion of struggle at all, to many pious individuals (*e.g.* Ps. cxix.). And sacrifice was the vehicle of sincere praise to many others (*cf.* Ps. iv. 5, li. 19, cxli. 2). Both writers state the effects which the Old Testament economy produced in the long-run, as if these effects had been universal and inevitable. But, once admit that for a time the Old Testament worship *seemed* to satisfy the conscience, and the philosophy of religion given us in the Epistle to the Hebrews becomes as acute and comprehensive as any theory could well be.

In the light of this theory, the temptation to relapse into Judaism, however strong by the magic of old associations, was irrational. Religiously, the Old Testament had never been thoroughly alive, and was now stone dead. As to its national or 'fleshy' advantages, the author calls upon his readers, now, for the first time, to surrender these from love to Christ, who, in love to them, had 'suffered without the gate' (xiii. 12, 13). They need not think, he tells them, that their life will feel empty if they are not in communion with a sacrificial worship. The sacrifice of praise, the sacrifice of active benevolence, the sacrifice of well-doing, are permanent elements in the service of God (vv. 15, 16). This very strong practical demand, that they should denationalise themselves, constitutes in one sense the gist of the letter. The author hopes—having paved his way by this masterly argument—to visit the Church for himself, and to see things put in train according to his wishes (verse 23).

In some respects we are wounded by the stern tone of the writer. If he meant to insist that those who had once relapsed should not be readmitted to communion (vi. 4 *sq.*), then his

views have been rejected by the consensus of the Christian Churches, though these views were supported by a whole series of rigorist heretics in the early centuries,—Montanists, Novatians, Donatists. The author's position and circumstances explain that he should write with stern faithfulness. Yet we cannot help wondering that he should show so little of the spirit of adoption as never once to call God Father, except in the austere tender phrase, 'Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?' (xii. 9.) Hardly any other book in the New Testament is so lacking in this note of the Christian consciousness. But, when he turns from God, the 'consuming fire,' to Jesus Christ, the revealer of God, the author discloses a deep and strong apprehension of the manifold elements of Christ's work. Perhaps no other New Testament writer holds together, with so much fervency, the memory of Christ's probation, as a man, and the faith of His Divine glory. The historical picture of the Man of Sorrows plays a part here which we can hardly parallel from any of St. Paul's epistles.

The date of the epistle can be fixed with considerable precision. It is addressed to a Church which had received the gospel not directly from the Lord, but from His personal disciples (ii. 3), some considerable time before the date at which the author writes (v. 12), so that they were now in danger from weariness at the Lord's seeming delay (x. 36, xii. 3). On the other hand, the temple worship must still have been carried on; not simply because the author uses the present tense in describing its ceremonies—that might have been part of his literary manner—but because, had the destruction of Jerusalem already taken place, he could not have failed to make capital out of the event, as the judgment of God upon the inadequate and now effete system of animal sacrifices. And probably the signs of the approaching Jewish war were proofs to the author that Christ's advent was near at hand (x. 37). We are thus led to put the epistle as near the date of the Jewish war as we dare—shortly before 70 A.D.—By the way, in spite of St. James's position at Jerusalem, there is no trace

of monarchical episcopacy in the Jewish-Christian Church to which our epistle is sent.—On the other hand, we cannot name either the author or the Church addressed. It is natural to try to fit the epistle to the circumstances of the mother Church at Jerusalem—the one great Church of purely Jewish blood with which we are acquainted. And there is nothing in the doctrinal contents of the epistle which could not be perfectly well explained upon that view. But, on the other hand, members of the Church we are in search of seem to have suffered fine and imprisonment at some former period of persecution (x. 32, 34), but never to have suffered death (xii. 4) for Christ's name. Their 'ministry to the saints' (vi. 10) most naturally means that they helped to swell the contributions sent up to Jerusalem, both by the Jewish (Gal. ii. 10) and by the Gentile Christians of other lands. Again, the Church in Palestine did not hear the gospel at second-hand (ii. 3); it was evangelised by the Master Himself. Finally, the tone of rebuke, in which the author speaks of his readers' low attainments in the Christian life, seems to forbid the view that he was addressing himself to Jerusalem. He was addressing a Church that was wavering in its faith down to the very foundation. Hence one can only feel amazement when excellent scholars like Dr. B. Weiss¹ and Dr. A. B. Bruce² light-heartedly set aside all this evidence, and take for granted that the epistle was addressed to Jerusalem.

If it were so addressed, Weiss unquestionably gives the most probable view of its authorship,—that it was written by Barnabas, after death had carried away James and the other leaders of the Church. The rich and generous Levite must have had great influence at Jerusalem; and tradition names him once—by Tertullian—as author of this epistle. But could even Barnabas speak with such severity to the illustrious and rather fanatical mother Church (Acts xxi. 20)? And, if St. James had just been martyred, is not Heb. xii. 4 a most astonishing statement? In no case could the words mean

¹ *Introduction to New Testament.*

² *Expositor* for March 1888.

that the actual readers of the epistle had not died for the gospel's sake; that was self-evident. The words must mean that none from among the Church had gained the martyr's crown.

If Barnabas was the writer, the epistle may possibly have been sent to Cyprus. Barnabas's home was there (Acts iv. 36); he had visited the island twice at least on his gospel tours (xiii. 4-12, xv. 39); and on the first occasion, so far as we read, the mission was carried on almost entirely in the synagogues of the Jews (xiii. 5). On the other hand, the epistle is not the sort of book which one expects from Barnabas. Its author seems hardly the man to be eclipsed by Paul either in oratory or in mental power. And, to some minds, it seems natural to explain Tertullian's attribution of authorship—which he makes confidently, as if there were no dispute about it—by his having confused our epistle in his memory with the so-called 'Epistle of Barnabas.'

If Luther's guess is right, and Apollos was the author, then it is natural to suppose that Apollos addressed himself to his home at Alexandria. Ritschl has argued with great ingenuity¹ that the Church there was at first peculiarly Jewish, with its single bishop and college of twelve presbyters. Now our epistle does correspond remarkably well to what we are told of Apollos. It is an Alexandrian book; it 'powerfully confutes the Jews . . . showing by the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ' (Acts xviii. 28); and even the prominence given to 'the teaching of baptisms' (Heb. vi. 2)² is more natural in an old disciple of John the Baptist (Acts xviii. 25). Against this it is objected that the Pauline authorship is strongly supported by learned Alexandrian Fathers at a later date. Might we meet this objection by supposing that the Gentile Church of later years did not fully inherit the traditions of the earlier Jewish-Christian community at Alexandria?

If these views fall to the ground, we must, so far as I see, give up all endeavour to name either the author or the

¹ In the *Entstehung der alikatholischen Kirche*.

² 'Laying on of hands' = Christian fulfilment of John's prediction.

destination of the book. St. Paul is, of course, utterly out of the question, and so are all St. Paul's Churches (unless Cyprus). Not only is his theology different, especially his doctrine of the law; besides that, his congregations blended together the Jewish and the Gentile element. Nor could he think of writing to Jewish Churches lying outside of his allotted mission-field. Or, if he did, he would write in vain.

We conclude, then; some Church of purely Jewish blood within reach of Italy (xiii. 24—not a Jewish community far East), acquainted with and deferential towards Timothy, the circumcised pupil of St. Paul (xiii. 23), probably either the church of Cyprus or that of Alexandria, was addressed by a contemporary of Timothy's,—perhaps Barnabas, more probably Apollos, possibly some unknown man.

Little as we know, however, there is one point of importance which can be made out, and which ought to be dwelt upon. Our author is confident of enjoying the sympathy of the office-bearers of the Church which he addresses (xiii. 17); he is confident of holding the same faith in which former rulers of their Church had lived and died (*ib.* 7). The intellectual movement which he combats (vv. 8-12), and which, he fears, will tend to throw his readers into the arms of the synagogue, is a novelty, an innovation. *This purely Jewish Church, with its purely Jewish mode of life, had professed substantially the same faith in Christ which animates the Epistle to the Hebrews.* In it, as in Galatia (Gal. v. 15, 20, 26, vi. 6), Judaising innovations had not been made with the goodwill of Church rulers, but in a spirit of jealousy against them. Perhaps it will be said our author was mistaken in this appeal. No; he was too skilful a dialectician to make any appeal which might chance to recoil upon himself. He knew that religious trust in Christ as the Saviour, not trust in good works, was the essence of the gospel professed everywhere by the Churches, whether of Jewish or of Gentile blood. He knew that the Jewish garment of outward habits, which the Churches of unmixed Jewish blood had hitherto worn, covered the spiritual hopes and beliefs of truly

Christian hearts. Ebionism was not the first form of Christianity; it is a diseased malformation.

Of the immediate effects of the epistle we know as little as we do of its author or of its recipients. But, when the blow fell, when Jerusalem was destroyed, then, though 'He that should come' had not 'come,' but still 'tarried' (x. 37), yet it was manifest that God had judged the sacrificial system. The particular danger against which the epistle is aimed had thus been decisively obviated in the course of God's providence. But, after Jerusalem fell, the epistle must have been of the greatest service to Christians of Jewish race in convincing them that the blow to their patriotic affections did not touch their spiritual treasures, that in Christ they had everything, that theirs was 'a kingdom that cannot be shaken' (xii. 28) even although they 'had not here an abiding city' (xiii. 14).

B. We have now carried our survey of the literature of the Jewish section of the Church down to the very verge of the fall of Jerusalem. And we must now break off from it in order to say something of the Apostle Paul.

I conceive that the Twelve were justified in devoting themselves almost exclusively to Israel, so long as their Master's sentence of judgment upon the rebellious generation remained unexecuted. But I conceive that any of the Twelve would have been no less justified in breaking through that restriction in order to carry out the commission of the risen Lord. As it was, the Gentile mission came into being slowly, partly through the agency of Barnabas. But another and a more powerful agent had been prepared for this great work. God from heaven had chosen a new Apostle to serve the gospel in heathen lands. Saul of Tarsus, 'the rising hope of the sterner' Pharisee party, was struck down by miracle when on his way as a persecutor to Damascus; step by step his reluctance was overborne, and he was launched on the Gentile world.

The other disciples had always seen the old covenant and the new in line with each other. They had grown up into

Christianity while they continued to observe the practices of their Jewish faith. But Saul, the unbeliever, had caught alarm from the spread of the new infection; his jealous spirit had divined how far the new sect might come to differ from the tradition of the fathers. With a wrong-headed but not wrong-hearted frenzy, ignorantly, in unbelief, he set himself to stamp out the contagion. So fine a spirit could not but feel scruples in such work; he was 'kicking against the pricks.' But these things did not check him; he rushed on, until Jesus Christ, a visible form, an articulate voice, came to meet him in heavenly glory as he drew near to Damascus. Then his old life fell in pieces about him, and he was born into a new life. His endeavours to save himself had only increased his guilt; his endeavours to do God's service had been only a fighting against God. Now he was saved by grace, because he had passed out of the old covenant, and been made an unworthy partaker of the new covenant of forgiveness.

With all this, St. Paul's love for his countrymen of course remained, and grew deeper, giving him 'great sorrow and unceasing pain in his heart' (Rom. ix. 2). Like any other good man who had been convicted of grievous sin, the apostle yearned to lead into the right way those whom he had hurried along the wrong path (Acts ix. 20, 29; xxii. 18 *sq.*). Perhaps it was part of his punishment that he was not allowed to labour for this end. God had chosen him for a different function (Gal. i. 16). He was specially fitted to labour among Gentiles, because, Hebrew of Hebrews as he was, his own experience had made it so plain to him that the Jew with his law was no nearer salvation than the Gentile without it, and that the Gentile in Christ was as near God as any believer of the seed of Abraham. Hence the world became this apostle's field. The rest took the Jews for their share; he got mankind for his (Gal. ii. 9). Barnabas no doubt was with him; and, even after they had quarrelled, Paul thinks of his old companion (1 Cor. ix. 6) as an apostle of Gentiles, just as he calls himself '*an* apostle' of Gentiles (Rom. xi. 13). But St. Paul is quite

aware of his practical primacy. When he is attacked by malicious admirers of the Twelve, he boldly retorts that he 'laboured more abundantly than they all' (1 Cor. xv. 10) in the same gospel (ver. 11). He has done and suffered more than all others (2 Cor. xi. 21 *sq.*); there 'presseth upon him daily anxiety for *all* the churches' (*ib.* 28). When, with his fine strategic eye, he resolves to get possession of Rome as a headquarters for Christian life and labour, he tells the Church there, in the powerful epistle by which he makes them acquainted with his system of belief, that 'he purposed to come to them, that he might have some fruit in them also, even as in *the rest of the Gentiles,*' being 'debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish' (Rom. i. 13, 14). He tells them, too, that (xv. 16) he is 'a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.' Evidently he feels that he is responsible to Christ for more than half the world. He 'had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision' (Gal. ii. 7).

Yet reason would that the gospel should begin at the synagogue, though it must afterwards pass to the market-place or the school of rhetoric. Hence, both in Asia Minor and in Greece, we find St. Paul systematically giving his first attention to the Jewish community. Unhappily his success is never very great among his own people. Soon they develop, in opposition to the gospel, a system of intercivic or even international persecution (Acts xiii. 45-50, xiv. 2, 19, xvii. 5, 13, xviii. 12). At Thessalonica, Jewish malignity was peculiarly marked.

(*a, b*) This state of matters is reflected in the first two epistles of St. Paul which we possess—the epistles to Thessalonica. The missionary theology which these epistles reveal is of a very simple kind. God is soon to judge the world. (1 Thess. i. 10; 2 Thess. i. 5, *sq.*; cf. Acts xvii. 30, 31). The proof of this is the resurrection of Jesus (*ib.*); and the postponement of His return is the opportunity of mankind to

escape from the coming wrath (*ib.*). In other words, St. Paul has not yet formulated in his public teaching addressed to Gentiles any doctrine of the atonement.

He and his converts have suffered so much from Jewish violence and hatred (1 Thess. ii. 14-16) that St. Paul, falling back on Christ's own denunciation of Jerusalem 'which killeth the prophets'—of the generation which 'filled up' the sin of its whole race—repeats the dreadful assurance that God has finally rejected them (*ib.* 16; Matt. xxiii. 38).

Hence, when in 2 Thessalonians St. Paul speaks of a future great manifestation of antichristian wickedness (ii. 3 *sq.*), he must be looking for it within the Jewish unbelieving community. That is his interpretation of the eschatological doctrine of antichrist. Our only difficulty lies in his combining this prediction with the call for watchfulness based on the assurance that 'the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night' (1 Thess. v. 2). His second epistle is to guard the doctrine of the first from abuse; does it not clash with the doctrine of the first epistle? It certainly seems to do so. But this is no reason for questioning the genuineness of 2 Thessalonians. Later on, in Rom. xi., St. Paul gives a different perspective of the future, and yet in Philippians we find the conviction as warm as ever that 'the Lord is at hand.' We may ourselves feel that it is most reverent, in view of Christ's words, not to scheme out a series of events in the future as certain to come about before the Second Advent. But St. Paul did not feel himself bound by this consideration.

(c) St. Paul's teaching is materially modified when he has to face Jewish-Christian controversy. He had already had to do battle for gospel liberty at Antioch and Jerusalem (Acts xv.; Gal. ii.). Now his congregations of Celtic converts were invaded by Judaising fanatics, who tried to propitiate the enmity of their unbelieving Jewish brethren by making circumcision co-extensive with Christianity, and by thus turning gospel missions into a means of aggrandising the Jewish nation (Gal. vi. 12). They came among the simple, easily

impressed Galatians with the reputation of good Christian men, —dwelt upon the prerogatives of the twelve (ii. 6),—told the people that, unless they assumed the obligations of law as God had once revealed these, they were incomplete Christians (iii. 3), nay, more, were imperilling their eternal salvation (v. 4; cf. Acts xv. 1). Naturally they met with only too much success (i. 6; iii. 1; iv. 9, 10).

This whole campaign, and the theory on which it proceeded, stirred St. Paul's nature to its depths. Incomplete Christians, indeed! Incomplete Christians apart from the law! What had the law done for Paul? (i. 13, 14.) Or for the men of Jerusalem? (Rom. x. 3.) The law is the abstract scheme of a possible justification; but really, among sinful men, it works only condemnation. It was never meant to give life. Salvation rests on the promise, which is quite a different thing. Grace and works exclude one another. Not that the law of God is opposed to His grace; but all it was given for was to shut men up to the gospel, when, in God's good time, the gospel revelation should come. In itself it was weak and beggarly—human—worldly. Now that grace has come, and Christ has brought redemption, the weariness of the old system is gone; we are free. Why imperil our souls by going back into legal bondage? A truly moral life is the gift of the Spirit, who comes to all that are 'in Christ,' and enables them, like Christ, to die to selfishness and sin.

Such were the thoughts which came burning hot to St. Paul's mind as he laboured to save his deluded converts. Though his treatment of law *in the Old Testament* may seem to us a paradox or an anachronism, still he and his opponents were substantially agreed in regarding the law as a means of self-salvation; and there is no doubt that the whole religious significance of Jesus Christ was imperilled by the Judaisers (iii. 26, 27).

(d) But, what he had gained at so great a cost, St. Paul was minded to use to the full. He had gasped out his protest to the Galatians as it were in sobs; but, when he recollects himself, he repeats the same process of thought calmly and

systematically in his great Epistle to the Romans. The real question at stake was no less than this—whether ‘the gospel were the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth’ (Rom. i. 16). And, if he could win acceptance at Rome for the truths which God had committed to him, he might hope to find it easier to transfer the headquarters of Christian missions to the capital of the world. The universal sin of man, which the law only serves to bring more sadly to view, clears the ground for that great manifestation of God’s grace in Christ by which, in Him, those who believe find everything. This gift is made to faith—the only organ (ch. iv.) of religious blessing; and is as universal as sin itself (ch. v.), and incomparably more powerful. The next section of the epistle (vi.-viii.) treats of the Christian life; and, beautiful as its teaching is, it seems to be somewhat hampered by St. Paul’s paradox as to the law.

In the third section we find St. Paul’s new programme for the course of Christian history. In order to understand his connection of thought, we must try to throw ourselves into the attitude of a Jewish-Christian reader. We shall then see that the gospel of grace appears to be *eo ipso* the withdrawal of privilege from Israel—nay more; the withdrawal of grace from Israel. True, the gospel addresses itself ‘to the Jew first’ (i. 16). Yet the gospel of Christ’s cross only came into being through the unbelief of some,—a sin which redounded to God’s glory (iii. 9, 7). Their unbelief during Christ’s earthly ministry, which killed Him, and their unbelief afterwards, clinging to the law (ix. 32) as their hope, were manifestations of the same principle. God’s rejection of Israel, and God’s mercy to the world, were two sides of the same decree (xi. 15 *sq.*). This is sound Christianity, based on the teaching of Christ Himself. But, now that St. Paul has to take a systematic view of the whole dispensations of God’s grace, he feels constrained to ask, Can the sentence of rejection be God’s last word to His ancient people? Observe, he does not ask, as we should do, Could God prepare the way of the gospel for ages, in order to hurry

through its historical career within a single generation? St. Paul habitually expected that the gospel age would be brief. But his faith in God's constancy forbade him to believe that Israel, the chosen, could be finally rejected. Hence he falls back on the doctrine of election. 'God forbid; God did not cast off his people, which he foreknew' (xi. 1, 2). He points out that God's grace had always been selective,—that never, in Israel's history, had the spiritual seed of God quite coincided with the 'children of the flesh'—that, even in prophetic times, only a 'remnant' had been in true fellowship with heaven. Thus it is nothing wonderful if many or most of the generation then alive should be cast off. But, on the other hand, their rejection as a nation cannot be final. God does not repent of His gifts. He has permitted the impotence of Israel in order that the Gentiles may be saved; but, when the 'fulness' of the Gentiles will come in, Israel, seeing their blessedness, will be moved to emulation, and 'life from the dead' will follow (vv. 11-15, 30, 31). Thus 'God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all' (ver. 32).

These chapters would be plain sailing but for a digression in ch. ix., where St. Paul is justifying by history the elective or selective character of God's dealings with Israel. In doing this, he lays down extremely hard predestinarian doctrine. For a moment, the apostle is a Calvinist or even a hyper-Calvinist. He thinks that he must adopt this doctrine of individual unconditional predestination in order to justify his doctrine of God's handling of the Jewish race.

But the truth is, that this logical bye-path, had he continued in it, would have proved as fatal to the apostle's argument, and therefore to his peace of mind, as it has proved to the peace of mind of many of his readers. If God's decree deals with men simply as isolated individuals, and deals with each according to God's sovereign good pleasure, irrespectively of moral considerations, then the argument that 'the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance' proves nothing for the apostle.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob may be safe in glory, through the operation of irresistible grace, in accordance with an irreversible decree of election; and the children of the kingdom may be cast into the outer darkness, in accordance with another irreversible decree of sovereign reprobation: and yet there will be no variableness with God. It is plain that the apostle occupies two incompatible points of view. And we shall do best to regard his Calvinism as a remainder of Pharisee logic, which he mistakenly thinks he must hold fast in order to safeguard the religious conception of God's grace. For observe how quickly he begins to qualify it. First, indeed, he tells us bluntly that we must not presume to criticise God (ix. 20, 21). But next he hints at the persistent moral guilt of those whom God condemns (ver. 22), and finally dwells on the subordination of God's partial decree of judgment to His world-wide purpose of grace (vv. 23, 24). Still more manifestly does he throw overboard his Pharisee logic when he resumes, in ch. xi., the theory of a national election. If those who are 'in Christ' do not 'continue' in Him, they shall be 'cut off' (v. 22). Where is the inamissibility of grace? And, if those who have been 'broken off' (ver. 20) 'continue not in their unbelief, they shall be grafted in again' (ver. 23). Where is the sovereignty of their reprobation? And, finally, the ultimate purpose of God, to which all His decrees converge, is 'that he might have mercy upon all.' Where is Calvinism now? A good man, if he falls into error once, gets up, shakes himself clean again, and goes on his way; but a man of narrow heart and cold affections runs straight into the ditch and never emerges.

What specially concerns us is the fact of the disappearance of the doctrine of Antichrist from St. Paul's theology. The question, whether Gentile Christians should be circumcised, raised distinctly the issue whether Christianity was a new religion. The Church of Jerusalem, absorbed in the hope of the second advent, and in its own theory of the events which were to lead up to the advent, had doubtless trusted Christ for salvation, but had never thought out to its consequences the

essential newness of the new covenant. When St. Paul states a theory of the religion of Christ, he regains the ethical contents of the Gospel in the shape of a doctrine of atonement and a doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the drama of the Christian religion vanishes from his own writings, and a historical perspective takes its place. Antichrist never reappears in St. Paul's epistles. And in these two—Galatians and Romans—eschatology is almost lost sight of. I believe indeed that 'life from the dead' (Rom. xi. 15) must denote the literal resurrection; but I believe this chiefly on the ground that St. Paul's prophetic programme would be incomplete if he did not at least indicate an eschatological terminus. Still, that is only a hint—an undertone. Later epistles show that the hope of the Lord's speedy return still lay warm at the heart of St. Paul. But it is significant that, in spite of his personal feelings, his doctrinal epistles should open up a prospect of moral growth which (to say the least) does not demand that the end of the world should come speedily.

Furthermore: it is significant that the first great theoretical epistle should use the language of universalism. I do not suppose that the apostle meant to teach dogmatic universalism. Nor do I think that moral beings, under probation, could properly be indulged with such a revelation. Yet we, as well as St. Paul, just in proportion as Christian principle gets uppermost in our minds, necessarily yearn and long for a universal triumph of the grace of God. That aspiration is inborn in the Christian heart; God will deal with it, according to His wisdom.

(e) I must also say something about an eschatological passage from a nearly contemporary epistle—about 1 Cor. xv. This is the more necessary, as many writers (*e.g.*, such different men as Pfleiderer and Godet) find millenarianism in vv. 23, 24. The most probable view of the heresy combated is, that it rested on Greek philosophy, and denied or ridiculed the idea of a glorified body (vv. 35, 44). St. Paul begins by pointing out that this criticism—whatever private speculations it may cherish in

favour of immortality—destroys the whole Christian system, since it is incompatible with one central truth—the bodily resurrection of Christ. Thus verses 17-19 are not positions held by the heretics, but positions which St. Paul charges on them as consequences of their doctrine—which he thinks they must allow to flow from it—and from which he expects them to shrink back in horror. Similarly, verses 29-34 (with their several exegetical puzzles—but these do not concern us) are further irreligious consequences which he charges on the natural drift (ver. 33) of such teaching.

As against it, Paul takes his stand on the well-attested fact of Christ's resurrection,—the pledge of our forgiveness, the pledge of our own completed bodily redemption in the future. He falls back on Ps. cx., twice, as we have seen, made use of by Christ. St. Peter had combined this Psalm with Ps. xvi.; St. Paul combines it with Ps. viii., to which—on the strength of the phrase, 'Son of Man'—he gives a Messianic interpretation. Christ, between His resurrection (=ascension) and His Second Advent, is seated at the Father's right hand 'till God hath put all Christ's enemies under his feet.' The last enemy to be subdued is death; *i.e.* the resurrection of the saints is the last point which we can discern in the prospect opened up to us by such a text as Ps. cx. 1. Those who find millenarianism in the passage postulate (Godet) two resurrections—one (*ἐνεστα*) of the saints, at Christ's return; a second (*ἐλτα*) after the millennium, at the 'end' of all things—a resurrection of those who died ignorant of the gospel, or impenitent, some of whom may have been converted in Hades. This final re-embodiment of the converted and unconverted dead is, thinks Godet, Christ's final victory over death. Now, there can be no doubt that the apostle supposes an interval between Christ's advent and the end. And there can be no doubt, further, that in that interval he places the general judgment of men and angels, in which the risen saints are to take part (vi. 2, 3). But for a second resurrection I can find no room in his doctrine. 'The abolition of the last enemy'

can be nothing else than the swallowing up of death in victory (xv. 54); and that takes place (ver. 53) when dead saints are raised, and living saints transformed. Or why should the apostle speak of the 'last trump' (ver. 52) if there are to be another trumpet and another resurrection and another victory over death about a thousand years later? There is no room for a millennium. Christ having been endowed with 'mediatorial sovereignty' only 'till his enemies are subdued'—then, when the saying is fulfilled, 'Thou hast put all things under his feet,' the mediatorial dispensation, having reached its goal, shall cease, and God shall be all in all.

If we were to judge by this passage alone, we should probably agree with Weiss that St. Paul confined the resurrection to believers, and assigned perpetual Hades to the Christless (cf. Psalter of Solomon). But the history of opinion makes this improbable. We therefore conclude that St. Paul merely omits to mention the resurrection of the wicked, and that he does this because it is the resurrection of the righteous to eternal life which corresponds to the primary religious postulate, and also because the Christian belief in immortality, resting as it does upon Christ's resurrection, speaks with emphasis and certainty of the believer's prospects, but far less directly of the unbeliever's.

Although we refuse to read universalism into the apostle's words, we see here again how inevitably any emphatic statement of the Christian hope tends towards universalism. If the apostle had worked in the shadow side of the Second Advent, his beautiful picture would have been marred, and his hymn of triumph would have died away in weeping and wailing.

(f) In 2 Cor. we find evidence that, about this time, it began to dawn on the apostle that he might not be spared to see the Second Advent. In 1 Thess. iv. he instinctively groups himself with the living 'that are left' (ver. 17), as distinguished from 'the dead in Christ.' And, in 1 Cor. xv., he is even more emphatic: 'The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.' Of course he does not teach this as a doctrinal

certainty. It slips out by the way, as an unquestioned assumption. But, in 2 Cor. v., he faces the possibility that he may be called to die. There is no difficulty in the passage, as compared with 1 Cor. xv., unless we are going wilfully to make difficulties. We have the promise, he says, of an eternal glorified body, with which Christ will clothe us when He appears from heaven. That is what we long for—what we groan for (cf. Rom. viii. 23)—being ‘absent from the Lord’ [and therefore quite as miserable as any Platonist in the prison of the flesh?] Nay more; it is God’s will that we should be ill at ease in our half-saved condition, even although we have the joy of [knowing that Christ has conquered death, and of] the indwelling Spirit as a pledge of our spiritual body and of eternal life.

‘Tis life, of which our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant.’

But, if it please God that we like Christ should be unclothed of this warm bodily wrapping, and should pass ‘through the grave and gate of death’ to our home with Christ,—we are still of good courage, and long even to be absent from the body that we may be at home with the Lord.

The captivity epistles are quite on the same ground.

(g) That to the Philippians contains the least novelty. St. Paul has no anxiety for the Church at Philippi, except for some personal quarrels (ii. 2 sq. 14, iv. 2)—against which he urges the example of Christ’s coming down from heaven for our sake—and except for the ever urgent anxiety caused by the Judaisers (iii. 2 sq.). He has now advanced to the point of an ardent desire for death (i. 23). Still, it is his strong belief (ver. 25), although not matter of certainty with him (ii. 17), that he will still be spared for a season to his dear converts. But soon (iv. 5) the final change must come. That glorious Being, who had appeared to him on the road to Damascus, will appear in like splendour before all the world, and will ‘fashion anew’ the old, weary, pain-racked bodies of His servants, till they assume the likeness of His own glorified Presence, ‘accord-

ing to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself' (iii. 20, 21).

(h) At Colosse a new sort of heresy had arisen, which afterwards developed into Gnosticism. Connected on the one side with Jewish tendencies (ii. 16), and with ascetic practices (ver. 21 *sq.*), it involved, on the other side, a superstitious reverence for all manner of intermediary beings, placed between God and man (18). To this St. Paul replies, Such beings can do nothing for you; and, whatever you might desire to obtain through them, you can get much more from Christ's Divine glory. The uniqueness, the majesty of the Christian dispensation grows before the apostle's eyes, as he contrasts it with the baseless dreams of the new error (ii. 3). Whatever powers may exist in heavenly places, depend and always have depended upon Christ (i. 16). How great is the revelation made through Him! (ver. 27.)—The practical outlook still ends in the same hope as before (iii. 4).

(i) The truths arrived at in a second controversy, St. Paul for the second time embodies in a calmly expository treatise. It seems to have been a circular letter to several Churches; hence we may explain the absence of salutations. The Epistle to the Romans seems similarly to have been circulated in different directions—as we should indeed expect. In 'Ephesians' there is the same awe-struck sense as in Colossians of the greatness of the gospel (i. 9, 10) and of the supremacy of Christ (20 *sq.*). Ephesians even lays more stress on the absolute blending of Jews and Gentiles in Jesus Christ (ii. 14, iii. 6 *sq.*). Many have denied its genuineness. And we may wonder that St. Paul should so express himself if, as seems probable, there were Jewish Churches, in Palestine and elsewhere, who never ventured outside the hedge of 'the law of commandments contained in ordinances' till after the fall of Jerusalem (cf. Ep. to Heb., Rev.). On the other hand, the epistle retains St. Paul's characteristic point of view as even (*e.g.*) the Pastoral Epistles certainly do not. Our great proof of God's purpose of mercy and power is in the resurrection of

Christ (i. 19). We have also the 'earnest' of the Holy Spirit (i. 14). Christ is reigning over us from heaven, according to Old Testament prediction (iv. 8). But the full redemption, for which we long, and which the Holy Spirit 'seals' to us, is still future (*ib.* 30).

We ought also to notice that in Eph. iv. 9 there is an important parallel to 1 Peter iii. 19.

Such was the apostle Paul's theology in its outward framework all through his life. Almost everything that we consider specially Jewish when we meet it in the Gospels was shared by Paul. He too expected the end of the world suddenly and immediately; he too yearned for the full realisation of the supernatural side of Messiah's work; he too felt as if Christian life under the dispensation of the Spirit were only a half salvation. It is St. Paul who affirms that Christians are to judge, not only the world, but angels. A most intoxicating form of belief, we are apt to say! But, along with this belief, we see in the apostle's life the utmost degree of humble faithfulness. All the authentic fruits of the Spirit of Christ appear in him—'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance'—truly the signs of an apostle, wrought in all patience. He had worked, too, more abundantly than all others, as a wise master-builder, laying the foundation of Christian faith, that 'they might see to whom no tidings of Christ came, and that they who had not heard might understand.' In the day of controversy he had clearly grasped the true issues, and firmly defended them. And he had given the first great theoretical exposition of Christ's gospel as something absolutely new, to which everything else in the world's history is subordinated.

C. (a) The Aramaic gospel of Matthew expected the Lord's return in connection with the fall of Jerusalem. To it, unbelieving Israel was the antichrist.¹

(b) The Apocalypse of John does not seem to share the

¹ See above, pp. 275, 286.

view so strongly taught in St. Paul's epistles, that Jewish and Gentile Christians are all one in Christ. I assume (as most probable, in spite of all that has been alleged to the contrary) the integrity of the book, and its composition by the apostle. It is addressed to seven representative Churches, predominantly Gentile, situated in Asia Minor. But it does not seek to impose on these Gentiles the Mosaic law—only the enactments of the 'council' of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 20, xxi. 25; Rev. ii. 14, 20). And it recognises Gentile Christians as occupying an honoured though secondary place (vii. 9 *sq.*, xxi. 24). In this book, the doctrine of antichrist and the drama of Christianity are expounded with great eloquence and indignation. The fall of Jerusalem is near at hand, but has not yet come about (ch. xi.). The Neronic persecution has revealed Rome as 'the mother of the harlots, and of the abominations of the earth—drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus' (xvii. 5, 6). The cry rings through the book that 'the time is at hand' (i. 3, iii. 11, xxii. 20). But the author, after so many years of labour and hope for Israel, cannot persuade himself that the Lord, at His return, is to find the Jewish people impenitent. After certain miraculous judgments, the remainder of the Jewish people will repent (xi. 13). Only then can the great judgment fairly begin (xi. 18). Mankind generally, unlike the Jews, are not destined to come to repentance through God's judgments (ix. 20, 21). Christ conquers His enemies and casts them into hell (xix. 19-21). The millennial reign is introduced by the first resurrection, and is followed by the last assaults of sinners, by 'Gog and Magog'—by the casting of these sinners into the lake of fire—by the general judgment, when all the wicked dead are condemned to this 'second death'—and by the revelation of the New Jerusalem. Even in the heavenly world, saved Gentiles seem to occupy a separate lower place from that of the chosen race, who are at home in Jerusalem (xxi. 24-26). Nevertheless, this picture is more satisfying than the description of the millennium, since it seems to find room, in

God's final purpose, for all that is great and good in the world's history.

The book is a cry forced out of its author by the agony of Israel's fall, and of the Church's first martyrdom. But it was not destined to be literally fulfilled, though unquestionably the prophet, who worked into his prophecy almost all the different phases of apocalyptic belief, meant it literally. Why then should we draw our doctrines from its somewhat lurid and Jewish-like pictures?

Instead of this millennial drama, other things came in God's providence. Israel did not repent. Jerusalem fell. The world and the Church went on as before. And with this a testing-time came for many Jewish Christians. They must either be Christians without the law, or Jews without the gospel. God had refuted the darling beliefs of more than a generation by cutting asunder the crisis of the Jewish people from the crisis of the Church and world. For St. John, at any rate, the lesson availed. He survived to put into shape a wholly different conception of Christianity, and to issue the last, and in many ways the most spiritual, of all the four Gospels. Peter, Paul, James were already martyred. But St. Paul had left behind him a mass of Gentile Christianity; others had contributed to this, under God, but he 'more abundantly.' So that, when patriotic and millenarian illusions were forcibly wiped away, men saw what the Christian religion really was—a new and great spiritual force introduced, by God's mercy, into this present world. Moreover, there were at least two great theoretic expositions of the gospel; the Epistle to the Hebrews, and St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. With these in its hand, the Christian Church was well able to recover from the shock of the Jewish war, and to take its bearings anew.

D. The seven epistles to the Churches in the Apocalypse, with their refrain, 'Behold, I come quickly,' had already connected the idea of libertine heresy with the prospect of the

Lord's second coming. We find this view repeated in several epistles, which are manifestly to be placed late in the apostolic age.

(a) The epistle of 'Jude, the brother of James,' recognises from the existence of such heresy (4) that it is 'the last time' (18), and, therefore, that the Second Advent—for which he quotes the Book of Enoch (14)—is close at hand.

(b) I place here 2 Peter, not because I believe it to be earlier than other books still to be mentioned, but because of its intimate connection with Jude. Its polemical part (ch. ii.) is simply the Epistle of Jude written over again, with the quotation from the apocryphal Book of Enoch left out, and the allusion to the apocryphal Assumption of Moses made so unintelligible that, unless we had Jude to guide us, we could not possibly tell what 2 Peter ii. 11 meant. This one verse refutes Dr. Marcus Dods's argument, that 'it is more reasonable to suppose that Jude . . . improved . . . Peter, than that Peter . . . blundered in borrowing.'¹ An extraordinary argument in any case, such as only apologetic zeal could thrust into a calm and scholarly mind. If I find an ill-written Introduction to the New Testament, which follows singularly closely the phraseology of Dr. Dods's book, am I to infer that 'it is more probable that Dr. Dods improved it, than that its author blundered in borrowing from Dr. Dods'? Then, again, both the historical allusions in ch. i. are such as could be drawn from the canonical Gospels. And, in chap. iii., the author vacillates between the present and the future tenses with extreme embarrassment; he makes no reference to the Jewish State, in which, till it fell, every Jewish Christian was so profoundly interested; and he does refer to St. Paul's collected epistles. When we turn to the external evidence, we find that the epistle does not appear either in the Peschito or in the Muratorian Canon, which between them embrace all the other Antilegomena; and that no certain quotation of it is to be found before the third century. The matter is of the very

¹ *Introduction (in loc.).*

smallest intrinsic importance ; but, if evidence proves anything, it is certain that the epistle was not composed by the apostle Peter. Against this, Weiss can only urge¹ that it was not worth men's while to forge apostolic writings in the sub-apostolic age. But the writer of this epistle seems to have taken offence at St. Jude's quoting apocryphal books. That may have been his primary motive for transferring the prophecies to Peter ; iii. 3, which Dr. Dods uses to prove that Jude used 2 Peter, is simply a hint taken from Jude 17—how else would a late writer phrase such a verse if he were engaging in this peculiar literary enterprise? And, if we suppose, with Matthew Arnold, that the writer made use of notes of St. Peter's opinions, and therefore felt warranted in attributing the whole letter to the apostle, we have got as good a theory of the book as we are likely to reach.

Nothing could more clearly mark the extreme lateness of the epistle, than the complaint, 'from the day that *the fathers fell asleep*, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation' (iii. 4). This is, no doubt, predicted as a complaint that will be made in the future. But ver. 9 reveals that it is really a present difficulty,—'the Lord *is not* slack concerning his promise—but *is long suffering* to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' And the New Testament could not take leave of the question of the Lord's Second Advent—which has been delayed so enormously beyond the time of which any apostle thought—in better words.

(c, d) The expression Antichrist only occurs in the New Testament in 1 John (ii. 18, 22, iv. 3) and 2 John (7), where it is applied to Docetic or Gnostic denial of the reality of Christ's saving work. I shall speak further of St. John's theology when I come on to his Gospel. In the first epistle we notice that he infers from the 'many antichrists' round him, that it must be 'the last time.' But he does not now embody his eschatology in fiery symbols like those of the Apocalypse, or in any pictorial symbols whatever.

¹ *Introduction (in loc.)*.

(*e, f*) Two of the pastoral epistles (1, 2 Tim.) contain a prediction of doctrinal heresy (1 Tim. iv. 1-3; 2 Tim. iv. 3) or of an outbreak of wickedness (2 Tim. iii. 1-5) within the Christian Church in the 'last days.' Here, as in 2 Peter, we are tempted to regard such prediction as a mark of the books being pseud-epigraphic. Did St. Paul, who lived for years in momentary expectation of the Lord's return, come to separate his own lifetime from a subsequent period which he called 'the last days,' or 'later times'? Otherwise the theology of the pastoral epistles requires to be discussed under the next head.

E. The last group of New Testament writings, although of course retaining faith in Christ's Second Coming, do not allow that doctrine to curtail the ethical contents of the gospel, and open up a prospect of historical development before the Christian Church.

(*a*) We place the First Gospel, as it lies before us in the Greek language, later than the destruction of Jerusalem. As we have seen, it incorporates a tradition which identifies the destruction of Jerusalem with the end of the world.¹ It is unnecessary to say, that that tradition must be earlier than A.D. 70;—perhaps it entered into the apostle Matthew's Aramaic *λόγια*, whether that book contained only Christ's discourses, or contained historical matter as well. But, though our first Gospel frankly incorporates this tradition, its own point of view is different. The actual fall of the Jewish state has brought it back to what we have seen reason to regard as Christ's own standpoint. It is 'Matthew'—not Luke—who represents Christ as saying 'the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness' (viii. 12; Luke xiii. 28 is less emphatic). All three Gospels contain the parable of the husbandman, with its moral; but 'Matthew' alone repeats the moral a second time, in explicit terms—'the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof' (xxi. 43). In the parable of the marriage

¹ Above, p. 275.

feast, 'Matthew,' perhaps (xxii. 8), is less distinct than Luke (xiv. 24); but that is owing to the conclusion appended to the parable in the first Gospel. And finally, how significant are the closing verses, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20! There is no mention of Christ's visible ascension, or farewell interview, as described twice by Luke, and implied in the Epistle to the Hebrews and elsewhere. The writer feels that he has done his work when he traces the foreign mission to the command of the risen Jesus. The chief element in the Church's hope is here not Christ's return, but His abiding presence (*sc.* by the Holy Spirit); and the 'end of the world' appears as the remote goal of a long development.

These words would not have been so recorded—certainly would not have been placed at the end of the Gospel, as a prophetic picture of the world's future history—if men's minds had still been on the stretch for the Lord's return at the fall of Jerusalem. But the words are well confirmed by parallels. Both of Luke's narratives represent the risen Lord as giving orders for the mission to the whole world; and St. Paul, the chief agent in carrying out Christ's orders, bears witness that the risen Christ manifested Himself to him, and forced him, rather against his own will, into the foreign mission.

(*b, c*) It is natural to take Luke and Acts together. For they are written in connection with each other; and the second brings out St. Luke's conception of the Divine programme of Church history more clearly than his Gospel does. In the Gospel, he, as well as the Greek Matthew, preserves (though in a slightly modified form) the traditions which connect Christ's Second Coming with the fall of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, I do not see how any one can read Luke xxi., and its parallels in the other synoptics, without admitting that the author must have written subsequently to the Jewish war, and that he has toned down the document from which he draws.

His own scheme of the future is found in these words of the risen Christ, to which he gives a place of honour—'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his

name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem,' after 'the promise of the Father' has 'clothed' the disciples 'with power from on high' (xxiv. 47, 49).

But, if the gospel of the risen Christ begins at Jerusalem, among the Jews, our author takes care to trace it as far as Rome, the capital of the Gentile world. The promise of the Spirit is fulfilled, with miraculous signs, on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.). Then, with the renewed preaching of Christ, a struggle recommences between Christ and the hierarchy. While the latter hesitate to push things to an extreme, their hand is forced by the mob who murder Stephen: the gospel begins to scatter from Jerusalem (viii. 4), and wins converts among Samaritans; while at least one Gentile family is admitted to the Church, under miraculous circumstances, by the apostle of the circumcision. Finally, Herod's persecution drives away the very apostles out of Jerusalem. For the second time—so the author hints—Jerusalem has rejected Christ.

Accordingly, the Gentile mission becomes the one centre of interest. It had begun quietly—almost accidentally (xi. 20); but, soon afterwards, God's grace had changed the foremost Jewish persecutor into the foremost Christian preacher. And, when Antioch, the mother city of Gentile Christianity, sends out Paul and Barnabas, the work rapidly spreads—but never to any great extent among Jews. From this point, till he brings him, a prisoner, to Rome, the author follows the fortunes of St. Paul, as the chief missionary to Gentiles, and the man best known to St. Luke. Peter only reappears at the 'council,' when the legitimacy of a Gentile mission without circumcision is under discussion (Acts xv.). Luke is desirous of showing that the two sections of the Church kept the peace with each other; but otherwise he drops the thread of the Jewish mission entirely. Nor does he regard the first foundation of the Roman Church, but rather St. Paul's arrival at Rome, as the significant point with which his narrative may end. Now it is plain that 'the kingdom of God has been taken from Jews, and given to those who will bring forth the fruits thereof' (cf. Acts

xxviii. 28). The implied career of the Christian Church in the future is a further course of witness-bearing among Gentiles,—in ‘the uttermost parts of the earth.’

The Acts, not less than the Gospel, seem to indicate that Luke wrote subsequently to the fall of the Jewish State. Only that event could give him such confidence in mapping out the providential course of history on the lines which he has adopted. Therefore the idea that he wrote two years after Paul’s arrival at Rome (Acts xxviii. 30) falls to the ground. And we can see why he should have stopped here,—his work had reached a natural halting-point. It may also be true, as Farrar conjectures, that it would have been dangerous to write on, as the Neronian persecution would have had to be mentioned. Another idea will probably find less favour—that Luke was reluctant to tell of his master’s martyrdom. At the same time, if we may draw an inference from xx. 25, we seem to find additional evidence that Luke wrote after St. Paul’s martyrdom; also, that he knew of no subsequent visit to Ephesus, such as 1 Tim. i. 3 seems to hint at. Meyer’s view, that Luke meant to write a third chronicle, is in itself not improbable. The conclusion of Acts suggests a sequel quite as much as the conclusion of Luke’s Gospel does. And, by describing the Jewish war, St. Luke could have made his standpoint plainer. But, even if he meant to write a sequel, Luke would not have interrupted his narrative unless he had completed one distinct part of the subject. I think we have seen that that was indeed the case.

(*d, e, f*) The pastoral epistles fall to be discussed here, because of what I may call the common-sense character of their theology. Their teaching is good Christianity and good Paulinism—but in a narrower form. They are admirably practical, admirably western, admirably Roman. They instinctively cling to ‘healthy teaching,’ and, accepting mysteries, keep them well out of sight. Thus the Second Advent, though it is still spoken of as an object of glorious hope, is no more than the given background of life. In the foreground there stands the duty of living ‘soberly, righteously, and godly,’

and orthodoxy. It is the voice of ancient Rome, consecrating her instincts for law and government to the Christian faith,—a very different Rome from the mediæval pseudo-Christian tyrant.

But was this tone acquired by the apostle Paul? Nothing can be alleged against the tone in itself; on the contrary, one rather likes it. But there is difficulty in believing that it was psychologically possible for St. Paul to come round to the view of law stated in 1 Tim. i. 9. And the three epistles are so closely akin that it is hard to tear them apart. We may attribute them, as painters say, to the 'school of St. Paul.' They are correct and edifying, but hardly masterly. The depth and richness of St. Paul, or St. John, or of the author to the Hebrews, is wanting. It is the same truth, seen from a lower level, in a more everyday light.

(*g, h*) We now pass to the highest form of apostolic teaching—the First Epistle of John, and the Fourth Gospel.

The Gospel does not repeat even the passing assertion made in the first epistle that 'the last hour' has come. No special manifestation of antichristian forces is postulated at any one time in the future. Judgment has already been pronounced on sin in the death of Christ. 'The prince of this world hath been judged' (xvi. 11), and 'hath been cast out' (xii. 31). Or judgment may be regarded as taking place continuously, through the word of Christ (xii. 48). Not that St. John's later writings, any more than St. Paul's, or those of any other New Testament writer, set aside the hope of Christ's Second Advent. The day of judgment is still expected to gather up and seal all previous processes of judgment. Christ had claimed the office of judge, and had thus taught that His revelations of God and of salvation were God's last highest gift to men. But, in St. John's Gospel, Christ's language implies that the Advent will not take place until some generations, at least, of believers have died. 'I will raise him up at the last day' (vi. 40, 44, 54). Correspondingly, Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit is given more fully than in any other Gospel. Matt. xxviii. 20 gives

emphasis to the gift of the Spirit ; St. Luke, in the Acts, gives the subject more emphasis. But in John xiv.-xvi.—written after men had ceased to count upon Christ's speedy personal return—we have the fullest New Testament teaching on the subject of the Holy Spirit. In all this, no doubt, St. John's memory went back to words of Christ; but we cannot definitely assert that his own spiritual and enlightened mind has not expanded the teaching which he conveys to us. The words quoted from ch. vi. seem to be shaped by the evangelist's consciousness that death had taken away almost the whole generation who heard Christ. And it is in the analogy of Scripture—*e.g.* it is in the analogy of an Old Testament prophet's revision of his own discourses, when he committed them to writing—if St. John has adapted the Master's teaching for the circumstances of the Church after the fall of Jerusalem.

The specific doctrine of St. John is that eternal life is a present possession of God's children. This eternal life is defined as consisting in the knowledge of God our Father as He is revealed in Christ (xvii. 3). And we shall not err—though the apostle does not expressly lay this down—if we assume that eternal life consists, on another side, in doing the will of God (1 John ii. 17). This view of the life eternal may have been indicated at times by Christ ; or St. John may have allowed his own phraseology to colour his report of the Master's kindred teaching. This Johannine doctrine corresponds with the Synoptic doctrine that the kingdom of God is a present reality. For eternal life is the characteristic blessing enjoyed by the children of God within the kingdom of God.

The Christian life, as thus conceived, is a more satisfying thing than the half salvation under which, as St. Paul tells us, Christians 'groan, waiting for the adoption.' No doubt the difference is one rather of emphasis—of light and shade—than of substantial inconsistency. St. Paul is full of the truth that, in believing, we have peace, hope, joy, eternal consolation. St. John, looking away into the distant heavens with his calm child-like glance, reports to us, 'Beloved, now are we

children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be.' Yet there is a difference; and St. John is more true to the normal tone of Christian service. Further, St. Paul's more doctrinal epistles have a polemical basis. They put the question, 'What is the true means of justification?' and the life of obedience comes in as a sort of appendix to forgiveness. In St. John things are more wisely proportioned.¹ Christ is, of course, the only spring of blessing; and forgiveness through His propitiatory sacrifice is the foundation and presupposition of the whole Christian life (1 John ii. 2). But within that life we seek and find—not mere forgiveness, but—cleansing, and the vision of God in Christ, and the doing of God's will as it is revealed in Christ's commandments and example, and as it is made possible by the new nature which God communicates to His children. All this, of course, rests on the fact that 'Jesus Christ has come in the flesh' (1 John iv. 2; 2 John 7)—that 'the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true' (1 John v. 20). Every blessing spoken of comes to us through Christ. There could not be a greater blunder than to think that the Johannean writings give any countenance to the pantheistic Christianity of a section of the Hegelian school.

Only in one thing is John's theology notably lower than Christ's own teaching. He is more of an individualist. Of the two views of the world's religious and moral history—the view which regards it as a process of judgment, and the view which regards it as a Divine process of universal salvation—St. John gives much more emphasis to the first. Both are true; both are necessary; so long as we are in the middle of the process, we can never blend the two views into one. St. John is quite within his rights in emphasizing one more than the other. Nor does he ignore the other. He is the author of

¹ St. Paul has the advantage (1) in the clearness with which he teaches that civil government is a Divine institution; (2) in the clearness with which he brings out that moral obedience, as well as the religious affections, implies the Holy Spirit's presence. Perhaps the second point is implicitly contained in John's doctrine of regeneration.

that noble summary of the Christian faith, 'We have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world' (1 John iv. 14). He attributes even to the Baptist the description of Christ as 'the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.' And he quotes Christ's promise of a universal salvation more than once.

Nevertheless he shapes his Gospel on these lines—that Christ's influence selected the sympathetic souls, who were 'of the truth,' out of the mass of indifference or hostility. In ch. xii. 48, Christ, as it were, sentences the world. From xiii. 1, He devotes Himself entirely to His own. And the aim of John's Gospel is 'that ye'—as individuals—'may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye may have life in His name' (xx. 31). His epistle, too, concludes with a stern moral antithesis between believers and the world: 'We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one' (1 John v. 19). But, if Christ is 'the Saviour of the world,' can this be the last word of the gospel? Christ's own teaching embraces a fuller truth when He tells His people that they are 'the salt of the earth,' 'the light of the world'—when He commands us to 'render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's'—when He lets us see that what heathen men blindly groped after—what all history groaned and travailed in pain with—yes, what history travails in pain with even until now, is found in the moral fellowship of the kingdom of God, with its infinite satisfactions and its indissoluble bonds.

Unfortunately, Christian theology did not start from the position either of Paul or of John. Montanism was a reaction towards that fanaticism which was the haunting shadow of living Millenarianism. Still more unfortunately, the Church replied to Montanism by pitting the hierarchy against the prophets—by combating fanaticism with sacramentarian and not with ethical forces.¹ The corruption spread, till Christendom

¹ I practically follow Ritschl (*Altkatholische Kirche*) in these statements.

was filled with a new legalism, from which, in God's providence, the Pauline dialectic again offered a way of escape, at the Reformation.

But Christian life cannot be healthfully developed from the point of view of the question, How is man to gain forgiveness? It involves no disparagement either of the Reformers or of St. Paul, if we find it necessary to go past St. Paul to St. John's doctrine of eternal life, and back from both Paul and John to Christ's own doctrine of the kingdom of God.

IX.

We have now looked into all the Bible evidence on the doctrines of eschatology, and must sum up what we have learned in order to draw a safe conclusion from it.

First of all, we saw that ethical piety in the Old Testament did not originally embrace the thought either of a future life or of future punishment. We saw that the Old Testament history was a process of growth, and that God, having called Israel to His service, and communicating with the people through prophets, revealed further truth as men grew desirous and fit to receive it. We saw too that doubt and questioning played their part in leading men to deeper knowledge of God. It was hard, while revelation was so scanty, to verify the justice of God;—that is the great anxiety of the Old Testament. But, though sin mingled with the doubts of men, God gradually led on chosen souls to a hope of personal immortality, and to a conviction that, in this life, God's punitive justice is not satisfied.

The prophets gave different pictures of God's final dispensation of grace. At one time they spoke of a Messianic king. At another time they spoke of a great manifestation of justice. And ultimately they came to speak of a resurrection, at least of some of the dead (Isa. xxvi.) and of at least some of the ungodly (Dan. xii. 2). When, after the return from exile, men found they had still to look forward to a revelation of God in the future, it was inevitable that all souls, quick and

dead, should come to be thought of as present at that great 'day of the Lord.' We saw that there were circumstances which turned away the people's minds from the hope of a Messianic king. And again we saw that, in the course of Providence, altered circumstances revived that hope; and that, when Jesus Christ came, there was keen general expectation of a Messianic king, of a day of Judgment, and of eternal life, although harmonists were much perplexed how to work together those different aspects of the prophetic hope. We also saw that, in agreement with Dan. xii. 2, eternal punishment was generally looked for and wished for as the portion of the wicked. But the pictorial representations of future punishment had been put in shape during the non-canonical period.

Then we saw how Jesus Christ entered upon the scene which had been so strangely prepared for Him. We heard His words confirming men's darkest thoughts of the evil of sin, and of the awful solemnity of judgment. We also heard Him speaking in tones of equal justice and compassion regarding those who had been stinted in outward privileges, and dropping hints as to the possibilities of repentance beyond this world. We saw Christ electing a moral ministry rather than a kingdom resting on force or an abrupt and premature exercise of judgment. All miracles are subordinated to this end. Christ seeks to win His people, the Jews, for the gospel; when He apprehends that it is not the Father's will to grant Him this, He is enabled to tell His disciples that His death is to prove the world's salvation—that He shall rise again—that, though Israel is lost as a people, His gospel shall find reception among the Gentiles, and that, at the last, at a time hidden in the counsels of the Father, He shall return in a kingdom of glory. Unsupported by the sympathy of any, Christ 'finishes the work given Him to do,' and surprises the unbelief of His bewildered and heart-broken disciples by showing Himself to them—alive.

All through His ministry, Christ had been tried by the unwillingness of His disciples to adapt their thoughts to His.

And, after the resurrection, the belief soon—in accordance with Jewish instincts—established itself, that Christ's return, which He had taught the disciples to regard as an absolute secret of God's providence, would take place very shortly. At first this belief seems to have been connected with revived hopes of the conversion of Israel, and of joyful 'times of refreshing' at Christ's Second Advent. But St. Paul, who in his early epistles regards Israel as absolutely rejected, no less confidently takes for granted throughout many epistles that the Second Advent is close at hand. And, even when the destruction of Jerusalem drew near, the tradition embodied in our Gospels did not postpone the hope of our Lord's return, but depicted His return as coincident with the fall of Jerusalem, and as a manifestation of unmixed anger towards the world at large. The Apocalypse of John shows a different but not much more pleasing treatment of the same theory. Only the fall of the Jewish state brought a change—at first lessening the confidence with which Christians looked for the Second Advent in the immediate future, and gradually giving place to the moral view of the world's history presupposed in the Book of Acts, and to the moral view of the Christian salvation which is taught in the Gospel and Epistle of John.

From time to time the New Testament writings re-assert the doctrine of eternal punishment in the form in which they had inherited it from the Synagogue. They do not even state such qualifications, or admit such rays of hope, as are found more than once in Christ's teaching. Only, in dwelling on Christ's death, St. Peter speaks of those who had died in wickedness as sharing in the visitation of His mercy. And, when St. Paul grasps the ethical contents of the gospel in a doctrinal form, and when in consequence he opens up a historical perspective before the Christian Church, the purpose which he attributes to God is 'that He may have mercy upon all.'

But, when we turn to apply our Christian conceptions of God's purpose to the actual world, so far as we can trace the

inner processes of the actual world, we find ourselves sadly at a loss. The Divine key does not seem to unlock the mystery. Facts and beliefs are still at variance. We are sure of God's justice, as our Old Testament predecessors were not. Christ has put beyond all question, for those who believe in Him, the justice and power of God and the certainty of the judgment to come. But, the love of God—we hunger to verify that revelation; we grope after some proof of it. And we seem to fail, as our Old Testament predecessors failed when they blindly groped after God's justice.

In the New Testament age this 'rift within the lute' was not perceived. Men expected the end of the world within their own lifetime; they prayed fervently for it; they longed for the revelation of wrath as well as for the revelation of grace. No wonder if the doctrine of future torment, which came down from the apocalyptic books, remained undisturbed, in possession of the field. It was what men craved for at that time. But can it be contended that a doctrine, which cost nothing to those who held it in New Testament times, is by them to be imposed for ever upon us, to whom it brings lifelong misery? God does not reveal truth till men are fit to receive it. Might we not invert the argument? Might we reason thus,—because the revelation of God's grace came to the world as 'glad tidings of great joy,' therefore no form of doctrine can be an inherent part of God's revelation, which would change the gospel into a message of eternal despair?

But we shall be told that Christ's revelations are final. Unquestionably they are. What larger hope we wish to gain is within the compass of Christ's revelation. Our argument for it is what Christ has taught us regarding the character and purpose of God. Or is this our superiority over the Old Covenant, that, whereas, under it, men's hopes might expand freely, with us there is not a loophole of escape left if we find that old beliefs, easily maintained in a duller age, stifle and strangle us? Consider how the Old Testament faith progressed; how it tore up old orthodoxies in the course of its progress; how

it kept step with men's practical obedience and with their fitness for learning the deeper things of God ; how doubt and questioning played their part, under the providence of God, in leading men onwards and upwards to Christ. Consider too that the New Testament phraseology for future punishment was borrowed from anonymous and unauthoritative writings. Consider too that the New Testament eschatology vacillated, changed its forms repeatedly, and announced the fall of Jerusalem as synonymous with the end of the world. Then say whether we are really bound to respect the letter of New Testament teaching in regard to future punishment.

What we are asking to be relieved from is no part of a Christian man's faith towards God. It is a dogma which St. Paul—though he held it, and was comfortable under it—left out of view when, as a Christian man, writing for Christian men, he described what Christ should do for us at the end of the world (1 Cor. xv.). It forms no part of the Apostles' Creed—no part of the Nicene Creed. Faith in Christ as a Saviour enters into the heart of our Christian profession ; faith in Christ as a judge enters into the heart of our Christian profession ; belief in a personal devil, or in the nature or duration of the future punishments of others, is no part of our faith towards God.

We are forced to ask for relief. We cry to God, and we are sure that His Spirit is with us in so crying,—that He Himself has led us into a spirit of love and care for all men. Naturally we were not so. We loved ourselves, and were careless about all others. But Christ found us, and put us under a law of love. The very meaning of our Christian life is, that we are God's fellow-workers towards an indescribably glorious victory of His grace. While the Church was a struggling minority, she could not extend her hopes so far as to the real salvation of the whole world. While the Church was a persecuting majority, slaying, strangling, and cursing in God's name, was she likely to wish for any remission of future torments ? But when humanity had a chance—when Christian

principle reformed the penal codes of earth—when Christian mercy began again to visit the prisoners and to undergo self-sacrifice for the outcast and the degraded—when torture was abolished—when sentences ‘for life’ became only nominal, and were really restricted within a fixed term of years,—who but God had taught us this? And must not God’s own administration be governed by the same principles? Must it not be directed towards the same purposes which He is so carefully, so patiently implanting in us? There may be many devoted and loving Christians who never feel this. But, if they live out the principles of the gospel, they will help to make others feel it. For ‘herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.’ A saintly life of unreflecting obedience may fail to react upon the traditional orthodoxy of the saint himself; but, in other minds, his efforts will shape themselves into a conscious prayer ‘that it may please God to have mercy upon all men.’

And there is another point in Christian faith which tends to put greater earnestness into this hope. Who are so conscious as Christians of personal unworthiness? Hence the wish that God may have mercy on others, whom we have resembled in unkindness and unthankfulness. Hence the hope, that the same grace which availed for us will avail for them. ‘He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger for ever.’ For why? ‘He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.’

I have confessed that the explicit doctrine of the New Testament is one of endless torment. And, if revelation were a literal detailed message from heaven, one would have no right to put any other representations on the subject, which Scripture may contain, in competition with those explicitly directed to the subject. But, if it be otherwise—if Scripture goes deepest when its writers are most filled with God’s Spirit—if at all times the degree of illumination is partly conditioned by the fitness of the earthen vessel to which God is intrusting His treasure—then we may give weight to what an inspired man

says *obiter* and beyond his own conscious apprehension. Thus the words already quoted from the 103d Psalm are not less suggestive because they assert a principle without applying it to our own subject. Again and again the Old Testament repeats this principle. 'He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy' (Mic. vii. 18)—an anthropomorphism how much truer than the 'refinements' of systematic theology! 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious'—a hideously misquoted text—is, in the Psalmist's opinion, the suggestion of an impossibility (lxxvii. 9). Most tender of all are the words, 'I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made' (Isa. lvii. 16). And the largeness of the words in which apostles state the Christian hope is all the more impressive because their own conscious theories were drawn upon so meagre a scale. 'It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross: through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens' (Col. i. 19, 20). 'God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all' (Rom. xi. 32). When we take such words in earnest, and clasp them to our hearts, we act in the spirit of the writer who represents Moses as praying, 'Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written' (Ex. xxxii. 32). We act in the spirit of St. Paul when he exclaimed, 'I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh' (Rom. ix. 3).

We believe, therefore, that the spirit of the New Testament corrects its letter, and that we are forced back from contemporary representations of future judgment, outside or inside of the New Testament, to Christian facts and Christian principles.

The Christian fact upon which the revelation of immortality is built is Christ's own resurrection. This is a fact which gives

an entirely different kind of assurance to the believer, concerning his own future state, from what it may perhaps intimate, or from what other revelations may intimate, regarding the future condition of the impenitent. My hope for eternity does not rest upon any Greek particle, or upon the exegesis of any balanced clause in an individual text; we have this hope 'if we believe that Jesus died and rose again.' The saving revelation of God comes to us in a form—is accompanied by guarantees—which imply the believer's escape from the power of death. We need not affirm, with the doctrine of conditional immortality, that the Christian facts necessarily imply a contrast between the eternal or endless existence of the saved, and the swift 'perishing' of the lost. We do affirm that the Christian facts give a special pledge to the saved, and concerning the saved, which, apart from other evidence, enables dying men to triumph through Christ.

But, besides the Christian facts, we have to consult the Christian principles.

The character of God revealed in the character of Christ is the very centre of the gospel's saving message. Out of the apprehension of God's revealed character all forms of Christian piety develop themselves. Wherever there is true faith in God, mixed with whatever error, the source of faith is found in the Son revealing the Father. All worship, which has not its real source—hidden though it may be from consciousness—in this Christian confidence towards God, is an idolatrous worship, which God will disown. But the God whom Christ reveals is one who, in His very nature, gives immortal life to His servants. 'He is not a God of the dead, but of the living.' Hence from the character of God, when fully interpreted to us by and through Christ, we gain for a second time the assurance that God's children cannot be touched by death. This assurance, like the first, has nothing to do with our doctrine of the lost; although again it does not prove the extinction of the lost.

Our ideal of life is given to us by the character of God revealed to us in Christ; His example is nothing less than the

translation of God's nature and will into terms of human experience. 'Redemption' is the revelation of the mystery hid from ages and generations,—the revelation that God 'is love indeed, and love creation's final law.' In so far as we are Christians, we must be living and labouring for the world's redemption; and in so doing we become the children of God. God is revealed to us as a beneficent will,—as a practical will, with whom we are to co-operate. There is no other way of knowing God, except by obedience; and thus the wish 'that it may please God to have mercy upon all men' enters into our very knowledge of God, and forms part of the means of our communion with Him. Faith is a function of the life. Conduct tells upon belief. A Christian is bound in His conduct to seek the salvation of the world. What we postulate is, that eschatology shall not be summed up in a dogma directly contradictory of the longings of the Christian heart. A merciful uncertainty is the most desirable of all remedies for an age weary of over dogmatism.

We cannot reshape the revelation of duty to suit the theory which regards this life as one's only possibility of escape from hell. Such views lead to madness, not to holiness. We dislocate all the teachings of Scripture when we try to sacrifice every other duty to the work of the revivalist. It is in our private callings, chiefly, that we are to bear witness for God before the world. We can never have the right to cast away our arms, and enjoy our ease; at the best, we are 'unprofitable servants;' but, earnestly as we ought to pray that God's light may shine in our lives, our Christianity is to be moral, not fanatical; we are to appeal to men's consciences, not to panic. God's will is that the moral life should expand in every direction—in the inner life, in zeal for others, in good customs and institutions. And God Himself will crown the process, both in the inner life, and in the rescuing of individual souls, and in the applications of Christian principle to all the circumstances of human society.

But, on the other hand, if we know God as a moral good-

ness, He must be what all His works declare Him—one who cannot tolerate sin, but must punish it. There is certainty of future punishment, if not of its kind or of its character; there is danger of irretrievable loss. It is not because God happens to be a moral governor that He is revealed as one who will judge sin. Mere benevolence occupies a comparatively low point in the scale of virtues. God's love is not mere benevolence. He will judge sin because He loves righteousness; He is perfect because He is 'a just God and a Saviour.' Grace includes morality within itself; love is justice at white heat.

Any dogma to the effect that man might sin as he chose, he should none the less certainly be saved eventually, sooner or later, would be an immoral dogma. Our battle against sin is a real battle; our danger is a real danger. We cannot sin with limited liability. Standing midway in the course of human redemption, we see not one law but two—sin reigning to death, and grace reigning through righteousness to eternal life. We cannot reduce the two laws to one. We cannot deny the universality of God's purpose in grace; we dare not qualify the certainty of retribution. We must let both stand—their unity or harmony covered from our sight,—matter it may be of hope, but never of dogma.

'Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds; thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep. . . . How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men *put their trust* under the shadow of thy wings.'

III.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE TRUTH OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

I.

IF it be true that the religion of Jesus Christ is a revelation from above, and that God's Spirit works effectually in all those who believe on Christ, then there can be only one kind of true faith, and this spiritual process must exist, the same in kind, wherever men are born into the family of God. Let us never suppose, in discussing with our fellow-Christians, that their conscious theory is any adequate measure of the facts of their spiritual experience. If either they or we are genuine Christians, then God dwelleth in us, and we in God; and the evidence by which we are confirmed in the truth of the gospel can be nothing else than the witness of God's Spirit. In other words, to speak subjectively, the spiritual and moral contents of Christian experience are the sufficient reason why lettered or unlettered Christians, of any church or school whatsoever, hold to their faith in the Saviour.

At the same time, the moral contents of Christian experience are apt to confirm men even in the errors and corruptions which they have habitually associated with the truths of the gospel. Thus the devout Romanist extends his reverence for Christ to the sacrifice of the Mass; and the devout Calvinist throws himself prostrate, not only before God in Christ, or in conscience, but before the letter of Scripture. Hence controversy arises, and a sifting process begins. For the sake of Christian experience itself, we ought to welcome the attempt to

define, as exactly as possible, what is the witness of the Holy Spirit, or the moral evidence for the gospel, and how much precisely it is which this witness attests. For, though a corrupt Christianity may produce true Christian life, it also produces—more abundantly perhaps—a spurious pseudo-Christianity. And even those who are under the teaching of God's Spirit cannot wholly escape the influence of their environment; the spiritual life will be stunted by bigotry or superstition, even in those in whom it is not destroyed. Finally, we have need to make our statement of the gospel and of its evidences as accurate as possible if we are to perform faithfully our work of witness-bearing in the presence of the un-Christian world. Nothing but Christianity itself will ever win men to Christ. It is strange that Christians should ever have forgotten this truth.

Therefore, in criticising hostile forms of theology, we shall try to discover how men were able to conceive of God as a God of grace, even when their intellectual assumptions were false. But it will also be our duty to point out how doctrinal errors tended to narrow and impoverish the soul's life in God.

The theory of this paper may perhaps be briefly explained as follows. We shall assume that there are five authorities recognised by Christian men—conscience, God, Christ, the Bible, the Church. The only question which can arise for Christians is, how God's authority utters itself through those voices by whom He speaks on earth, and what is the relation of these voices to one another. Now, in the mediæval period, the Church placed itself above all other sources of authority. God could only speak through the Church; Christ could only work through the Church; conscience might only speak above her breath when she agreed with the Church; the Bible was to be interpreted by the Church. Thus the Church, which was meant, and which had tried, to be the servant of Christ, was in a fair way to make itself a substitute for Christ. When the Reformation came, Protestantism broke with the Church; then, seeking for a basis of belief which would justify its revolt,

and which at the same time would keep lawless minds subject to Christ, it took the Bible as absolutely normative of Christian thought and life. But the Bible *per se* is a purely external authority, no less than the Church. And an external authority does not appeal to conscience. I ask the reader to go a step further back, and to recognise Christ as the direct authority through whom God transacts with the conscience of men. We have no hostility to the Bible. Nor had Protestants any hostility to the Church, if it were reformed and well-ordered; yet they held it necessary to put the Church back into its right place, subordinate to Scripture. We hold that more recently the Bible has got out of place in the thoughts of orthodox men, and that it must be subordinated to the direct influence of Jesus Christ. If duly subordinated, both the Bible and the Church will take their place as exercising a delegated authority, and as helps in the spiritual life.

It may also be well to explain what we mean by calling the evidence for Christianity an internal evidence. Usually, internal evidence pre-supposes an external standard with which one compares the result of one's study. If I find internal evidence for ascribing an ancient book to a known writer, I do so because his acknowledged works contain phenomena which correspond to those of the book which is under discussion. By calling the evidence I make use of internal, I mean that it is accidental, an 'undesigned coincidence' with the style of Plato, or of Cicero, or of whoever may be the author in question. I do not mean that my *whole* evidence is found inside the disputed book; only half is found there, and the other half of the tally is found elsewhere. Now, there have been many attempts to draw out the internal argument for Christianity by postulating an *a priori* natural knowledge of God, and by proving the correspondence of the Christian scheme with this pre-Christian or 'natural' doctrine of God. Without, for the present, criticising that procedure, I beg to point out that my own meaning is different. Christianity includes the satisfaction of pre-Christian moral instincts and aspirations; but it

goes beyond them. And the strength of the argument for Christianity does not lie in that part of it which comes nearest to the 'natural theology' of the eighteenth century, but in that part of it which constitutes, as it were, such a new gift of God to the world as men had never desired or imagined. Christianity does not create its own standard of judgment; that is false; but it does develop it. Hence one cannot know what the gospel of Jesus Christ is unless one knows it from the inside. On the other hand, the Christian life is not anything different from the culmination of the moral life. All, who know right from wrong, and who follow the Master's voice, are under training for promotion. There is no gulf or break in continuity between the simplest efforts at well-doing and the loftiest triumphs of soaring faith. God is revealed to us as the righteous one; God's Spirit is in the smallest beginnings of good (or else, whence come they?), no less than in its highest consummation. It is really possible for any one who follows the call of duty to grow into faith. Just in proportion as one is faithful, one's spiritual vision clears; just in proportion as one is self-indulgent or wilful, one's spiritual vision grows dim. The world is a real probation and battlefield, where Christ manifests Himself to all faithful and candid souls. In following Him we do not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

II.

Very different was the conscious doctrine of revelation which actuated men's thoughts in the Middle Ages, and which passed on from the Romish Church into Protestant orthodoxy. It was assumed that revelation consisted of doctrinal mysteries, and that Christian faith, on the side of intellect, consisted in passive assent to what was authoritatively revealed. Obedience for obedience sake was the typical virtue of mediæval piety, and a belief which outraged 'proud reason' was all the more meritorious on that account. The Church system was fundamentally opposed to anything of the nature of internal

evidence in our sense of the term. If inquiry is a sin, personal verification of what one believes must also be a sin.

This theory of revelation is the translation into doctrinal forms of the practice of persecution by a Christian power. For persecution wears a different character according as it is practised against Christianity or practised by Christianity. Paganism did not persecute from any religious earnestness of a mistaken sort. It persecuted from social fears. Had Christianity been a mere speculative system, like Stoicism,—had Christians been able to conform to the established heathenism, like philosophers,—there would have been no need of persecution. Or, if Christian faith had kept within its own territory, like Judaism, it might have provoked dislike, but not a war of extermination. It was the character of the Christian religion as an exclusive system of belief which yet was a missionary system,—it was the gospel's claim to be a universal religion, joined with its condemnation of all false religions,—which drew the fire of paganism upon the army of Christ. But, when the battle was won, when Christianity was nominally supreme, and when society was remodelled on the basis of Catholicism, then the resumption of persecution meant something quite different. The Church might use the weapons of paganism; but she did not use them, like paganism, in the interests of mere social tranquillity. The Church might use the weapons of the old Covenant; but she did not represent, like the Jewish Church, an unaggressive tribal religion. Christianity persecuted in the spirit of its own immense moral earnestness, as the possessor of supernatural truth, responsible for the mischief which error might work in the souls and lives of men. Hence Christian intolerance was intellectually far narrower than pagan intolerance. It laid an absolute arrest on the progress of the human mind as paganism had never done. Free discussion is the very breath of life to science; but Catholicism, with its conception of revelation, and with its conception of the duty which Church and State owed to revelation, felt compelled to prohibit freedom of discussion. It was not by liberty of thought that men

could be saved, but by unquestioning obedience to the Church of God.

Now, in adopting this line, the triumphant Church was disloyal to its own past. In the age of the pagan persecutions it had conquered the world for the most part by its inherent strength. Moral force had defeated brute force. The religion of a small minority had conquered the *orbis terrarum* by defying the terrors of human authority. Now that it was supreme, it was not content to do what it could by means of its moral influence; it made use of brute force in its own cause. But, if force has a right to dictate to the human conscience, then Christianity ought never to have been in a position to wield the magistrate's sword. If submission is always right, and rebellion always wrong, Christianity is self-condemned. Of course I do not mean to say that the practice of persecution by the Christian Church was the one reason why Catholicism assumed its hostile attitude towards reason and conscience. Every great historical institution, such as the mediæval Church, is an immensely complex phenomenon. Many influences must have been at work to narrow the theological conception of revelation before the Church could think of cramming orthodoxy down men's throats at the sword's point. Yet persecution marked the climax of the whole process. And, as long as persecution was in use, it was the strongest guardian of the mechanical conception of revelation.

The mediæval despotism is criticised from different points of view by the man of science and by the evangelical Christian. The man of science, knowing that his own pursuit was sacrificed to the alleged interests of religion, is apt to take for granted that the emancipation of science was a blow to religion itself. The Roman Catholic Church is not unwilling to encourage this belief. Thus both scepticism and bigotry take pleasure in representing Luther as a half-hearted predecessor of Voltaire. And M. Comte, from his own point of view, as the advocate of 'Catholicism without Christianity,' chimes in with the same accusation; Protestantism merely disintegrates

the social fabric. But the evangelical Christian throws upon the subject a new light, which is equally opposed to superstition and to unbelief. Mediævalism destroyed the conditions of faith as well as the conditions of science. I am not shut up to two courses—either to profess belief because I am forced to do so, or to run riot in disbelief because I am free. There is a third course ; I may believe upon internal grounds. Besides the pseudo-intellectualism of authoritative dogma, and the genuine but narrow intellectualism of science, there is a moral world open before me ; and progress in the moral life implies that very exercise of reason and conscience which Romanism forbids. Romanist Christianity is the enemy of science ; but the right use of reason and conscience has nothing to fear from science. Its enemy is also our enemy. The effort to serve the gospel by establishing a social and intellectual tyranny degrades the gospel. No man is nearer Christ because he is forced to profess orthodox opinions. You lead men away from the spiritual life if you lay stress upon unmoral and unreasoned certainty.

Doubtless even the mediæval tyranny made room for a certain exercise of human thought. Reason was to be the ‘handmaid of faith’ ; *i.e.* its formal functions were to be acknowledged ; receiving its conclusions ready-made, intellect was to be allowed to find arguments in their support, and to put the best face it could upon them. There is no doubt that, within these limits, Romanism is extremely reasonable. Its foundation is blank unreason ; but, if it can get you to overlook that little circumstance, its astuteness in developing its position may readily stagger the most hostile critic. If God were to place an authoritative deposit of opinion in the world, such a body as the Church of Rome would be well fitted for its administration. If God were to communicate grace through a priestly caste conveying supernatural magic to believers, the Roman Catholic would have incomparably stronger credentials than the Greek or the Anglican communion. That is the cause of the rhetorical persuasiveness of the Roman creed,

bankrupt as it is in logic, during these latter days of controversy. But the rationalism of the Romish system goes deeper. It asserts mankind's universal knowledge of God through the works of creation,—though nothing short of baptism can save any soul. And Anselm's doctrine of the atonement builds upon an *a priori* conception of God—not upon a Christian conception of God. God's honour is supposed to be satisfied by the suffering of Jesus Christ on behalf of those whose penalties God is subsequently to remit. Not the justice but the honour of God is the watchword of the mediæval thinker. Living as he did in an age when all the bonds of civil society were disguised in the form of personal obligations, Anselm conceived of sin as a simple wrong done to the heavenly Emperor, and of satisfaction for sin as something which made good the slighted honour of God. An *a priori* conception of God, not the Bible revelation of God, is normative in this doctrine. Now of course we do not find that mediæval theologians explicitly recognised the doctrines of natural theology as determining the course which revealed theology (as they might have called it) must follow. Nevertheless it is the same mood of mind which betrays itself in both doctrines. Those, who treat natural theology as a given deposit of truth possessed by the human race apart from historical revelation, are the same men who explain the work of Christ by a given *a priori* conception of God, independent of the Christian revelation. Anselm's acute theory, like all forms of rational doctrine, is a bit of internal evidence for Christianity, in the old sense of the words. Its immediate strength, and its ultimate weakness—its dialectic strength, and its moral weakness—are found in the fact that it appeals not to experience, but to a definite given *a priori* belief in God. It does not tax men's minds; it does not 'blind them with excess of light'; it transfers the half barbarous usages of chivalry to the heavenly jurisprudence.

All the rational elements in mediæval teaching must be recognised, as having helped to make the Church's yoke tolerable to men. The few learned would ease their minds by

dwelling on the ingenuities of scholasticism ; and it is astonishing how the opinions of philosophers filter down to the common people. But it is more important for us to ask, How far could the moral forces of Christianity accredit it to spiritual minds, under so tyrannous and unchristian a system? To a large extent, we cannot doubt. Obedience is part of Christian duty, though not the first and last word of the gospel ; pride is an enemy of the spiritual life, though reason is not ; the Church is the God-appointed sphere for the exercise of worship, though not by God's will a tyrant over men's beliefs, or a substitute for Christ. Nay, the rationalism of the theologians would help faith, in so far as devout men, by its aid, conceived more clearly their infinite obligation to God in Christ. But the truth is, that, if the Church was not truly moral in those days, yet there was practically no morality outside of the Church. All reverent and dutiful instincts accrued to the service of the Catholic Church. There might be lamentation over worldly bishops, disorderly monks, even over wicked Popes ; but to seek a remedy outside of the Church would have been like seeking another universe outside of infinite space, or another God outside of the Blessed Trinity :—so completely had the Church beaten down all its rivals, and gathered into itself whatever was holy, or praiseworthy, or the ground of hope, whether earthly or heavenly. The Church dominated men's consciences because it was psychologically impossible for them to criticise her. Her apologetic argument in those days was an *auto-da-fé*. But the Church cannot have lived by *autos-da-fé* ; she must have lived by the good that was in her.

In these latter evil days in which our lot is cast, when even Christian princes are afraid to burn heretics, the infallible Church has had to put her arguments in shape. And her statement of the 'reason of faith' at the Vatican Council¹ constitutes an almost amusing parallel to the Calvinistic doctrine of the witness of the Holy Spirit. Both doctrines assert that there is ample rational ground for belief apart from the opera-

¹ Printed by Salmon as an appendix to his *Infallibility of the Church*.

tion of Divine grace. Having thus apparently made grace superfluous, both doctrines assert that Christian belief only occurs under the supernatural influence of God's Spirit. The Vatican doctrine, being concerned to leave some room for human freedom and responsibility, teaches that the Divine gift of belief merely amounts, in the first instance, to an intellectual persuasion of the truths of the Christian religion. If the Christian (to use Roman Catholic language) 'corresponds' freely to this grace, then his faith is 'formed' by love. There is also a curious hint in the language of the Vatican finding, to the effect, that intellectual belief is free if it is not founded on the 'constraint' of argument, but on the power of God's grace; as if believing truth upon evidence was somehow inconsistent with freedom, or as if believing without sufficient evidence was a mark of freedom, even if Divine grace was the operative cause of faith. Calvinism, on the other hand, cares nothing for human responsibility, for which it has provided by its doctrine of imputation; but it is anxious to connect the faith of the intellect with the full experiences of the Christian heart; and therefore it teaches, that, wherever men believe on the witness of the Holy Spirit, they are made partakers of all the blessings of salvation. Thus Vaticanism teaches that, while reason would have us admit the intellectual claims of the gospel, as a matter of fact no man does admit them till his reason has been reinforced by grace. And Calvinism teaches that, while reason already convinces us of the truth of the Bible, the witness of the Holy Spirit convinces our intellect a second time. But each system represents its own basis of belief as directly enjoying a supernatural guarantee. Dr. Salmon has pointed out the consequence in the case of Romanism. 'The real check which prevents Roman Catholics from putting to themselves the question, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" is the fear lest they should trifle with a supernaturally communicated gift of faith.'¹ Such teaching poisons the very fountain-head of truth.

¹ As above, p. 80.

It was not the evidential baselessness of the mediæval system which led to the Reformation ; nor was it the indirect damage done to Christian faith by resting it on a human authority. These evils were too obscure to be detected in the dull light of the dark ages. Even the injury done to science, though it may have helped to provoke the Renaissance, did little for the directly religious movement. The Reformation sprang out of definite abuses—gross religious and moral abuses, which proved to be so inveterate, that those who would escape them were driven, against their own will, into breaking Catholic unity. In other words, God's providence could not save men from interposing the Church between themselves and Christ, otherwise than by breaking the Church into pieces. And, in order that it might be broken, the Church was suffered to be defiled with grievous sin. Had the mediæval system taught substantial truth upon a wrong basis—had it, so far as possible, taught the pure gospel upon its own authority—the day of freedom might never have dawned. As it is, the Church is broken ; but the way of God's Spirit is made plain before Him. Much has been lost ; but Protestants are safe from one form of idolatry—the idolatry of the Church.

III.

The Reformation, being a directly religious movement, did not pay much attention to the speculative question of the basis of faith. It disentangled men's religious and moral emotions from the kind of subordination to the visible Church in which they had been kept for centuries. But there the change stopped. Protestant orthodoxy, casting about for a test of primitive Christianity which might justify its revolt against Rome, found such a test (quite rightly) in the Bible. Mediævalism had taught it that the Bible was an absolute authority—had taught this, even while the Christian Pharisaism, like Judaism in earlier days, was making the Word of God of none effect by its traditions. The authority of the New Testament, taken quite in earnest by Protestantism,

satisfied the religious necessities of the moment, and formed a rallying-point against fanaticism. Everything else went on as before. Persecution went on, if less heartily; the doctrinaire conception of revelation, the belief in revealed mysteries, lived on. At the Reformation, and down to the Westminster Confession of Faith, we are still in the mediæval atmosphere. The Westminster Confession does not once name miracle as an evidence of Christianity. The battle is still between dogmatist and dogmatist. No attempt is made to state Christianity in a form which will appeal to the candid but undogmatic human being. The moral postulates, upon which Christian apologetic must more and more proceed, are buried out of sight under pretentious doctrines of imputation. Calvinism may be taken as the religious theory of the Reformers, pure from the taint of sacramentarianism, and free from that weakness which seeks refuge from shocking conclusions in illogical compromises.

The apologetic positions of the Westminster Confession may now be stated and criticised. First, there is such a thing as natural theology. 'The light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God as to leave men inexcusable.' But natural theology cannot issue in a spiritual religion. It is not 'sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation.' Hence the truths of natural theology are not verified by experience, or by moral evidence, but by barely intellectual evidence. This doctrine, on both its sides, is simply carried over from Romanism. Rome denies the possibility of salvation for the unbaptized; Geneva thinks necessary to follow suit with the denial of salvation for the unevangelised. On the other hand, the new use made of the doctrine of absolute predestination threatens to break down this exclusiveness. 'Elect infants dying in infancy' and 'other elect persons *incapable of being called outwardly by the ministry of the word*' are 'saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when and how he pleaseth.' Perhaps the last category of elect persons is meant to apply only to idiots

living in Christian lands, for whom Christian relatives might be solicitous even in that grim age. For the very next paragraph informs us that 'men not professing the Christian religion cannot be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess.' If then the elect who are saved by extraordinary means are only idiots and madmen, never heathen, the limitation ought to have been expressed; but it is a thoroughly irrational limitation—a ridiculous and blasphemous limitation of the power attributed to God's Spirit. On the other hand, if the Confession means to affirm that some heathen may be saved, all we are told is that they are not saved by following the light they have. There is a third possibility. The last paragraph may be meant to apply only to deists rejecting Christianity. But if so it is badly expressed. And we can take little interest in all this purely *a priori* dogmatic deduction. It is apologetically valueless, and wholly out of touch with moral ideas.

Nor is the theory of an inoperative knowledge of God through the works of nature one which will bear inspection. St. Paul says that the revelation of God in created things leaves the heathen without excuse. Why? Because the heathen did not follow the light; 'knowing God, they glorified Him not as God, neither gave thanks.' The obvious implication is, that it was ideally possible for mankind to enjoy communion with God through His revelation in nature, although, as a fact, the world generally has fallen deeper into darkness through the love of sin. Otherwise it would seem difficult even for a Calvinist to explain, why the revelation in nature should leave men without excuse. On the Calvinistic theory, it is not a personal privilege that condemns men, but a covenant made with Adam not only for himself but also for his posterity. Hence we feel that the apostle's words do not exclude the possibility that God may have led home some of His wandering children through the light of nature; nay rather, the apostle's words favour this belief. Only, of man-

kind as a whole, the reverse has proved true. And God, sending His Son to be the Saviour of the world, has respect to the mission of Christ in every administration of grace. For indeed it is not one degree of head knowledge or another that will save man ; it is the reconciliation of heart and will to God by His grace. Saving knowledge of the truth may be absent in the full blaze of ecclesiastical privilege, in the full blare of orthodox profession. Saving knowledge of the truth may be present, if God so pleases, in the very twilight of His revelations. One thing is certain ; if knowledge is impotent to save, it is irrelevant to condemn.

The second point in the Westminster Confession's apologetic is its statement of the evidence of Christianity to the unregenerate. This is contained in the celebrated rhetorical paragraph in praise of the Bible. There we are told that, independently of the saving witness of the Holy Spirit, and independently also of the Church's testimony, 'the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the *entire perfection* thereof, are arguments whereby' Holy Scripture 'doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God.' This glowing rhetoric covers, as rhetoric is apt to do, several ill-harmonised logical conceptions. There is no reference, indeed, to external or historical evidence, unless we read such a reference into the 'testimony of the Church.' But some of the phrases—the vaguest and least exact—refer to internal evidence in the proper sense of the term. 'The heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the *entire perfection* thereof,' are considerations (however exaggerated in the statement) which are calculated to tell upon man as man—to convince the conscience—to develop and mature a Christian experience. But, before you can make a correct statement of the internal

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evidence, you must allow that it contains psychologically the 'promise and potency' of regeneration and of the witness of the Spirit. The Confession, however, does not do this; and the spiritual merits it speaks of as belonging to Scripture are left quite in the abstract. I do not think either a New Testament Christian or a modern Christian would have dreamed of describing the glories of the gospel without once mentioning God's love.

'I, who saw power, now see love perfect too.'¹

But, when the Westminster divines do condescend to specify some definite mark of the divine glory of Scripture, the mark selected is 'the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God).' Here is their *a priori* conception of what revelation must be. Like the Roman Catholics, the Westminster divines interpret the revelation of God's grace in the light of *a priori* ideas,—and what defective ideas! 'Another clause in their paragraph—'the consent of all the parts' of Scripture—is, even if true to fact, an altogether secondary form of internal evidence. Finally, the remaining clause—'the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation'—embodies the strongest appeal which the internal evidence makes to men, when it is conceived by forensic orthodoxy in the light of an *a priori* doctrine of God. If the gospel reveals character,—if 'the truth on which our faith must ultimately rest' is 'that God is the Father of our spirits,'—if

'God is love indeed,
And love, creation's final law—'

then I believe the gospel, not only because it provides for my own case (although it does that, and all that it effects in me implies that), but also because it shines with its own light, as a transcendently worthy conception of God and His ways, too worthy to have been invented by men and sinners. But, if God is penal justice joined to arbitrary purpose, or if God is self-regard working on the lines of penal justice, then the

¹ Browning, *Rabbi ben Ezra*.

Gospel revelation of God's willingness to save sinners reveals nothing but itself,—a fact—a sufficiently attested fact—an unexplained fact, or a fact explained only by the production of a *maximum* of Divine glory. Such a gospel has no light to shine in; and the only subjective motive for believing it is personal convenience, and a desire to find a way of escape from the consequences of sin. No doubt, to thousands of Christians, some apprehension of the light of the glorious redeeming love of God has struggled through the mists of low and unworthy theories. But we have to criticise doctrines as we find them; for bad doctrines are the enemies of the religious life.

One might interpose here, thirdly, the well-articulated doctrinal scheme of the Confession, as implicitly forming a part of its internal evidence for the gospel. Just as Romanism is a marvellously well-worked-out scheme for an authoritative communication of dogma, and transmission of the magic of sacramental grace, so Calvinism is a marvellously thought-out conception of the mechanical working of grace. Its doctrine of the atonement is what tells most directly on religious experience. Unlike Anselm, the reformers traced the atonement not to the infringed personal *honour*, but to the broken *law* of God. Hence they regarded Jesus Christ as satisfying, chiefly by bearing its extreme penalty, the claims of that public criminal law which sin had outraged. This thought plays a great and honourable part in religious experience. But we cannot regard it as altogether valid or as altogether healthy. It leaves us finally with an unknown God; 'an arbitrary act cannot reveal character.'¹ And, whatever claims evangelical Arminianism may put forth, it is undeniable that to Calvinism the plan of salvation is merely arbitrary. Not only does it originate in God's 'mere good pleasure': its limited results are due to the circumstance that 'God was pleased to pass by the rest of mankind.' As a way of representing (*viz.*, to the converted) God's free mercy, evangelical or Calvinistic orthodoxy has carried with it something of the internal moral

¹ Campbell.

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evidence communicated by God's Spirit. And even the more repulsive parts of Calvinistic doctrine have helped to illustrate, for some souls, man's absolute moral dependence on the grace of God, or else have served to express for them their sense of the guilt of sin. Yet all these services of Calvinism to the cause of truth have been partial. Men's minds have been warped by it; it has hindered at some points as much perhaps as at other points it has helped forward the kingdom of God.

Fourthly: the final Calvinistic apologetic is found in the supernatural witness of the Holy Spirit to the contents of the Bible. The results of this in men are again heterogeneous. First, it makes the Christian absolutely certain of the truth of the Bible history and doctrines, as sent from God. But rational argument could do this of itself; the Bible is of such a nature, say the Westminster standards, that no one can read it without being convinced that it is Divine. Secondly, the witness of the Spirit reveals our own salvation through Christ. For this witness is only given to true believers, and it is given to them for their upbuilding in the Christian life. Here then are two distinct things mixed up in the Calvinistic doctrine of the Holy Spirit's witness,—first, the assurance of the Bible's intellectual truth, and second, the assurance of personal salvation. The first, at any rate, is supposed to be absolute,—to be certain, if not demonstrative.

To this doctrine we are prepared to assent, if we are allowed to restate it in what we think a truer form. All good gifts come from God; and He is peculiarly known to us in the moral life, as the God of righteousness. The assurance of the truth of God's revelations is, in a very special sense, His personal gift to us. And, when we rightly understand this assurance, we see that it includes the element of personal confidence towards God—the germ, if not the full development, of the assurance of salvation. In other words, when we grasp with all the force of our moral nature the conviction that God is love, we cannot but perceive how we are ourselves enriched by God's grace; 'we know and believe the love which

God hath *to us*.' But this moral conviction of the highest of all spiritual realities stands in direct continuity with our moral assurance of lesser and commoner workings of God's Spirit. We know God's voice in the Bible, just as we know it in other books ; we know God in Christ as we know God in His works ; or rather the difference is not in the form of our knowledge, but in the matter of knowledge—in the revelation itself. God is half-concealed in nature or in history ; but Christ is God's absolute image, in whom the Father is personally present. If you assert that there are two kinds of spiritual certainty, you deny the spiritual world. If you affirm an absolute breach of continuity within moral experience, whether you call the breach conversion, or whatever else you call it, you may be a Gnostic, but you are no Christian. Real moral conviction of the truth of the Bible attests the general substance of revelation, not its detail—not the form in which it is expressed. Further, what conscience affirms is not parallel to historical evidence—is not a substitute for historical evidence—but its complement. The evidence of experience would be insufficient if we had not external testimony to start from, telling us how God has verified Himself to us, and what God has done for us, in Christ. And, again, the evidence of experience does not assure us that the record is infallibly true. It implies that the record is sufficient—that it is able to put us in touch with the historical Christ, who is not dead to the world, but still pervades it by His Spirit. No one would dream of using the witness of the Spirit as a proof of the integrity of the text of Scripture. Many generations of devout souls may have had sweet emotions in reading the gloss to 1st John, which spoke of the three heavenly witnesses ; but we know that the verse was no part of Scripture. There has been error in the text of Scripture, yet Scripture has done its appointed work. Similarly, there may be doctrinal divergences in Scripture ; there may be scientific errors ; there may be historical discrepancies. Yet, if Scripture brings us into contact with God and Christ, it does its work. Its work, no doubt, im-

plies the presence of the Holy Spirit. But what the Holy Spirit attests is the general scheme of the gospel, under which Christ lays hold of men's hearts—not any intellectual calculation.

Again, it may be objected: But I feel that I have a moral persuasion of the truth of my Bible, which, though I cannot put it into words, differs from the certainty produced in my mind by arguments or even by moral considerations. These make truth probable; but I, thank God, am certain of the truth of my Bible, the Holy Spirit making me so. Now, it is true that many ignorant people have a strong practical working belief in moral truths which they could not express in words, or defend in argument. But the latter circumstance is accidental. *They* could not—these simple souls—defend their beliefs; but there is a rational ground that can be stated in support of every rational conviction. And the only way in which fallacies can be weeded out from the public mind is by a process of restless criticism. I believe, no doubt, a multitude of scientific truths, without having checked the evidence on which they rest; but what makes it rational for me to do so? Simply the fact that, within my knowledge, hundreds of the acutest living minds are engaged in discussing every scientific theory; so that it is practically certain that, sooner or later, error will be detected and exposed. Science is not an esoteric mystery. Though few men develop, or can develop, the faculty of science, still it is inborn in every man; not perhaps the genius of discovery, but certainly the faculty of criticism and verification. It is my own nature—human reason, that dwells both in me and in others—which makes the discoveries of science. I am trusting my own faculty, though not my own use of it, when I accept the accredited results of investigation. And again, how far do I believe them? What do I stake on them? Certainly not my soul's salvation. I may accept an evidence of a still lower grade; I may accept common fame for matters of common notoriety, which do not affect me personally. But, if I find that I am personally affected, I must have the evidence gone into. I 'believe' that Smith & Co. are solvent

and prosperous merchants—*i.e.* I have no reason to believe anything else; but, if I am invited to join the firm, I do not enter it on 'faith,' but go carefully through the accounts, or employ an expert to do so for me. Doubtless, in personal relations, belief does not rest upon arguments, but upon complex experiences of 'head, heart, hand.' A man can no more be argued into Christian faith than he can dine upon a cookery book. We can only assure the agnostic 'you would have to feel with me, else you would never know.'¹ But the very point of moral and Christian experience is, that it is a thing not technical or professional, but broadly human—that it may be and ought to be realised in every human soul. Hence the witness-bearing of a Christian before the world is an appeal to latent powers and sources of perception in every human breast. Hence the gospel is moral. But every conviction which, *a priori*, is possible only for some, is likely to be a hallucination. The *testimonium spiritus sancti* as defined by Calvinism is indistinguishable from a hallucination. An unreasoned conviction is a highly respectable thing, provided there are arguments or experiences which satisfactorily justify it. But mere certainty that the Bible is true may be no better than blind faith in the Koran, or in the Mass, or in the Book of Mormon. Obstinate error is the commonest weed that grows in the human mind. We can only save Christian faith from being classed with such weeds if we recast our doctrine of it; if we connect it with moral experience; if we make it attest the general spirit of Scripture, but cease to load it with responsibility for the letter, or for details. Unlearned saints are right in thinking that their certainty of the Bible's truth rests on the witness of God's Spirit; but they are wrong if they think that moral experience does not imply the presence of God's Spirit.

IV.

It was not therefore mere perversity which led Protestantism into the *doctrinaire* period. There was no 'fall of man'

¹ *Middlemarch*.

between the Reformation and the Age of Evidences. Orthodoxy had stated the experimental evidence in a paradoxical and unfruitful shape. Orthodoxy, in its dogmatic blindness, had immediately identified conscientiousness—piety—Christian faith—with belief in the letter of Scripture. By the Reformation it had broken the absolute power of the Church, but only in order to establish the absolute authority of the Bible record. Conscience, God, Christ, were supposed to speak only and fully through the Bible, and through the Bible viewed as a compend of doctrines. Just as the devout Mediævalist could not separate religion in his thoughts from the superstitious church system of his age, so the devout Puritan could not believe in any piety that was not slavishly subordinate to the misapplied Bible. In so far as he was really pious, the Puritan or the Catholic loved the Bible or the Church for the moral and spiritual good that was in it. But, for his neighbour, each was content to invoke the help of persecution. It is, however, no real reason for belief in Christ, that, if one does not profess to believe, one will be fined, imprisoned, pilloried, or burnt alive. I say, as I have said before; the ‘orthodox rationalism,’ which rested the truth of the gospel upon the brute force of persecution, is the real parent of that unorthodox rationalism which began to rest Christianity upon argument.

And more than that. It cannot be denied that the *historicity* of the Christian revelation is obscured in the Westminster Confession. Its writers have in view a dogmatic system, just as Romanists have in view an ecclesiastical system; both take for granted that all moral goodness will flow along their own little channels. It needed the criticism of misbeliefs and disbeliefs to teach the dogmatists what they ought to be doing—not arguing, but bearing witness—not for a doctrine, but for a life,—for one who ‘was with the Father, and was manifest to us,’ that we ‘might have life through His name,’—manifest at a definite point of time, under definite circumstances, in a definite Personality; since when He has worked unceasingly, through the Church, and without the Church, and in spite of

the Church—through the Bible, and outside of the Bible, and in spite of the misinterpreted Bible. Of course the representation of Christianity as resting on argument narrows the conception of revelation. The apologists did not simply give the historic element its due place; they turned away almost entirely from the moral element. The old confused belief, under which inconsistent views were naïfily combined, came to an end with the Age of Enlightenment. Men were not to believe *both* because they should be hanged if they did not, *and* because the Holy Spirit bore witness with the truth; they were to believe on the compulsion of argument. Revelation was no longer both *doctrinaire* and spiritual; it was purely *doctrinaire*. One is tempted to inquire, whether the Lessing view of revelation as a republishing of moral truth¹ is not the complementary abstraction to that of the orthodox apologists. But certainly the other it was which continued the orthodox tradition.

Forced to argue by the disuse of persecution, orthodoxy constructed, in the first place, a rational or natural theology, resting on intellectual considerations. Deism stopped short here, and held that this natural or rational knowledge of God could impart salvation. Orthodoxy regarded Christianity chiefly as 'a republication of natural religion, under circumstances of advantage,' though it also regarded Christianity as including supernatural mysteries. And the old thesis of the 'insufficiency of natural religion' survived in the more evangelical or more thoroughly orthodox circles, as if salvation was impossible apart from the knowledge of the wonderful 'plan' of salvation. Miracle was the 'seal,' attached to the 'doctrines' of Scripture and authenticating them. Prophecy, regarded as prediction of contingent details, was a subordinate kind of miracle. Natural theology proved that there was a supreme Being; and a message accompanied by supernatural events must necessarily come from God. It was man's duty to examine the credentials of revelation; but, once he had satisfied himself as to their genuineness, it was his duty to submit his intellect

¹ Cf. Dr. A. B. Bruce on *The Chief End of Revelation*.

unquestioningly to the contents of revelation. Thus, in this orthodox rationalism, the doctrinaire conception of revelation lived on. The idea of absolute authority is common to it with Mediævalism and with the Reformation system. Only it argues instead of persecuting. And, being pressed by earnest Deism, if not also by earnest Atheism, it cannot feel so certain as its predecessors did that all moral goodness will be found on its own lines. Nay, that is not the point to it. The point is a revelation of supernatural rewards and punishments. On these heteronomous considerations it bases the duty of faith. 'The gospel,' it thinks, 'if true, is tremendously true,'—as if truth were subject to quantification. What it means is, The gospel, if true, bears tremendously upon our personal *interests*. These were the essential supports of Christian faith, according to this system. They proved the truth of Scripture. Even to Butler,¹ 'a future life' is 'the foundation of all our hopes and of all our fears: all our hopes and fears which are of any consideration.' God is, to Butler, a natural certainty; and religion—natural religion—begins with the probability of a life to come. Religion thus resting upon our interests, other forms of evidence, such as the account of other individuals' experience, were auxiliary and subordinate. Miracles proved the truth of Christianity as the demonstrations in Euclid prove his theorems. What could others' experience do but make that which was already overwhelmingly probable a little more probable still?

Now, it is interesting to notice that this barely intellectual Christianity is no novelty. It is a fragment of the old orthodoxies, Mediæval and Protestant, which is now setting up business on its own account. The authority of truth had been conceived in this fashion for centuries, although, over and above its intellectual evidence, truth had been supposed to rest upon the authority of the Church, or upon the miraculous testimony of the Holy Spirit. One cannot wonder that, in an age of inquiry, these supposed extra guarantees of truth seemed

¹ *Analogy*, Introduction.

to fade away, and that men were content to rest their belief on that sufficient rational evidence which, as they had been taught, truth independently possessed.

At the same time, this rationalised theory of Christian evidence does not correspond very well to the contents of the Christian revelation. The argument from miracle teaches us to regard revelation as a collection of authoritative doctrinal dicta, some of them historical facts, others of them inscrutable mysteries. On this view, Christ would appear to be only a teacher, and only one teacher among many. And miracle would seem to be loosely attached from the outside to the truth which it guarantees. But the Bible revelation consists of historical facts themselves miraculous, such as the Deity of Christ, His sinlessness, His resurrection. Physical miracles, indeed, are no more than 'signs,' appropriate confirmations in the phenomenal sphere of those moral and redemptive forces which they accompany. But the facts themselves are supernatural; and they are not truly known by any one, unless God and His salvation are received into the heart, by faith in the facts in which God has manifested Himself. It is possible, no doubt, to stretch the conception of revealed dogma until it shall include historical miracles as well as doctrinal mysteries. But, if we do so, the doubt is already forced upon us whether revelation can consist merely in doctrines, and whether miracle can serve merely as a seal to the truth of what it accompanies. We do not believe in our Lord's resurrection only that we may be sure of the truth of His words; we need it to be assured of pardon and of our own resurrection. So too with all the other supernatural elements that enter into the proper fabric of the gospel.

In point of fact, apologetic Christianity of the eighteenth century type is far more favourable to Pelagian than to evangelical doctrine. Natural religion, so called, was the heart of the matter to apologists, even while they insisted that the gospel 'republished it under circumstances of advantage.' The strength of Butler's writings consists in the great power with

which he presses home the doctrines of probation and of personal responsibility. Up to this point, he brings out the internal or moral evidence for the gospel with unrivalled power. It was no small gain to have these truths stated, unentangled in magical doctrines of salvation by sacraments, or in Calvinist doctrines of salvation by imputed merit and irresistible grace—to be assured ‘that God, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man’s work.’ That is an essential part of the Christian truth. Perhaps it must come first in the series of lessons learned by men. It was matter for thankfulness that the modern world should have begun to grasp it. But we are not fully Christian in our thinking till we subordinate the doctrine of personal responsibility to the message of the common salvation, not of works but of grace, which is revealed in Christ. Only half views of truth are attainable on the lines of Pelagianism; and the evidence-mongers, as we have seen, tended to throw men’s minds into a Pelagian attitude. Pelagianism may be content to treat Christianity as a doctrine. If we see it to be a life, we are led on to new and deeper views of revelation, faith, grace, salvation.

Apart from this Pelagian bias, is the orthodox conception of authoritative revelation a sound one? Is it logically tenable? Can evidence lead the human mind into an attitude of entire surrender to an external source of truth? On this point again I am happy to quote Dr. Salmon’s admirable reply to Roman Catholic pretensions: ¹—‘It is easy to show that it is in the nature of things impossible to give men absolute security against error in any other way than by their being themselves made infallible.’ ‘Our belief *must*, in the end, rest on an act of our own judgment, and can never attain any higher certainty than whatever that may be able to give us.’ To think otherwise involves ‘the logical fallacy of arguing in a circle.’ ‘Rational conviction,’ resting upon internal evidence, ‘can be felt by no member of a Church claiming to be infallible. For her first principle is that her teaching shall be subjected to no

¹ As above, ch. iii. pp. 46, 47, 52, 58, 59.

criticism. . . . Consequently her teaching can never receive any subsequent verification. . . . It requires no Divine commission to be able to promise freedom from doubt on such terms as these.' All this, which is advanced with excellent force and relevancy against Romanism, may be brought to bear, with equal force and relevancy, against the doctrine that Scripture bestows infallible guidance. No doubt the Romanist claims have special difficulties to face. Romanism pretends to rest upon Christ and the New Testament; it alleges that Jesus Christ founded an infallible institute under the charge of St. Peter; but the New Testament, so far from containing anything that an impartial mind would accept as evidence in support of these views, contains abundant proof of the contrary. Take just one phrase from the apostle Paul—'Those who were reputed to be somewhat (*whatsoever they were it maketh no matter to me; God accepteth no man's person*),' those reputed persons being 'James, and Cephas, and John.' These words dispose both of the supremacy of St. Peter and of Dr. Salmon's¹ amazing theory of the supremacy of St. James 'over the whole Church.' I do not think Dr. Salmon, in his otherwise admirable discussion, has clearly enough distinguished the *formal* impossibility of proving infallibility by rational arguments, from the *material* impossibility of proving it in the case of Romanism, owing to the inveterate hostility of facts. It is only the first that tells against the infallibility of Scripture. The second does not; we cannot say that Scripture is as much opposed to the idea of its own infallibility as it is to the idea of Peter's supremacy. On the other hand, the Romish organisation looks very like what the guardian of a secret and magical tradition ought to be; while the mss. of the New Testament are entirely unfitted for retaining a supposed infallible deposit. And, when infallibility is in question, 'a miss is as good as a mile.'

In the first place, then, there is a formal absurdity in the supposition that men are to be argued out of the use of their

¹ Ch. xix. p. 350.

reason, and led to prostrate it before a book. If Scripture demanded this, the demand would be irrational, and Christianity would stand condemned. But does Christianity shut us up to the evidence of miracle? Does it throw us upon an *a priori* given conception of a God, demonstrated by natural theology, and communicating with us by means of miracle? On the contrary, Scripture tells us there may be such things as lying wonders. Mere signs, then, are no sufficient reason for faith in God. Or let us ask the most dogmatical of apologetic Christians, Would you believe *any* doctrine, whatever its moral complexion, if it had miracles enough in its train? If you would, you are no Christian. If you would not, then a certain amount of moral excellence is at any rate a *sine qua non* of revelation, and in so far its evidence is partly internal. But, if we have so much of internal evidence, can it stop just there? You will either have to assert a pre-established harmony between the details of Scripture, on one hand, and the postulates of man's rational and moral nature on the other hand—and a pre-established harmony is excessively precarious—or else you will have to assert that the light of God's revelation, when welcomed by the obedience of faith, educates and develops man's moral faculty. But in that case Scripture becomes a light to our eyes—not a substitute for eyesight—not an absolute external authority.

Another and most striking defect in the barely intellectual construction of the Christian evidences was, that it failed to produce certainty. Butler may insist that 'probability is the very guide of life;' but the strength of his own arguments does not lie in their direct logical cogency; it lies in the moral considerations latent within them. The books of evidences, which propose to demonstrate to us the supernatural, offer us, instead of demonstration, a long chain of probable reasoning—the probability of a probability of a probability. And in logic such a chain is a good deal weaker than its weakest link.

Partly on this account, and partly because the new life of the evangelical revival gives orthodoxy a stronger distaste than

ever for the Pelagianism which is apt to accompany the intellectual view of Christian evidences, another change takes place, and internal evidence begins to be reintroduced as a make-weight or supplement to the external evidences. This internal evidence is nothing else than the 'peculiar doctrines of Christianity,' as Dr. John Erskine expresses it in words quoted by Professor Candlish.¹ Therefore we have not to do here with the reappearance of Calvin's doctrine of the immediate attestation of the letter of Scripture by the Holy Spirit; we have to do with a proposal to make use of Christian doctrine as part of its own evidence. And the doctrine meant is orthodox doctrine—the theory of Christ's punishment as our substitute—that part of the forensic theology which touches experience. This also is where Dr. Erskine's nephew, Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, started in his career as a thinker. He began with making that use of orthodox conceptions which a warmly evangelical nature makes of them, and worked his way on—as a fearless intellect is sure to do—to conclusions which were incompatible with his premises, and which, in point of fact, led him to abandon the premises from which he had originally started. Chalmers, again, did not think his way through the subject so keenly as his friend Erskine did. But he began at the same point; he began there and stayed there. Every reader of his *Life* must have noticed how—with some little difficulty—he adjusted himself to the 'peculiar doctrines;' *i.e.* when spiritual religion took hold of him, he forced his mind into conformity with the traditional mode of statement under which spiritual religion had presented itself to him. Both in church politics and in doctrine, Chalmers wished to be a conservative reformer. His hand was forced by circumstances in the practical sphere, and the great and good Tory became a great innovator. In doctrine the revolution is not yet complete; the leader is still lacking. But there is no reason to doubt that here too 'Forward!' is the order of the day. The same Providence, that forced the

¹ *The Testimony of the Holy Spirit—Theol. Review*, Jan. 1888, p. 99.

great churchman, with all his love for the past, to enter on new paths, will yet, in spite of men's lingering backward glances, lead us to a land of promise where we shall enjoy a new and living grasp of truth.

The internal evidence, as referred to by John Erskine, or by Chalmers, or (at the first) by Thomas Erskine, did not involve any dogmatic or apologetic innovation. It postulated an *a priori* given conception of God, reached by intuition, or evolved in the mind by the revelation of nature. Chalmers takes for granted¹ that those to whom he is commending the gospel are convinced Theists; and the doctrine of God underlying his orthodox theory of the Atonement is an *a priori* conception of God as legally just. All that 'internal evidence' of this kind proves is, that the alleged revelation is not inconsistent with God's known nature. God is legal justice; a revelation of grace is so far accredited if grace proves to be harmonised with legal justice. Similarly, the doctrine of man, as expounded in this scheme, is given *a priori*. Man has certain needs, pre-eminently the need of forensic justification; a revelation which is aware of our needs and provides for them is so far accredited; at any rate, such a revelation is peculiarly welcome to us. On this its orthodox construction, internal evidence is nothing else than a *conditio sine qua non* of the truth of the gospel. If we assume the correctness of orthodox doctrine, we must concede that a genuine revelation, which is to profit sinners, will be the revelation of a proffered substitution. But there is nothing in the character of God or in the experience of man to make it *a priori* probable that such a disclosure will be true. It may be a cunningly devised fable,—the offspring of our necessities, the dream of our hopes, rather than anything solid or self-commending. Hence, on the premises of orthodoxy, it is right to treat the internal evidence as no more than an auxiliary to the external. That is its formal function, if orthodoxy

¹ See his *Evidences of Christianity*, Book iii. : *On the Internal Evidence of Christianity*. And so Thomas Erskine in the *Internal Evidence*.

is right; though here again a living piety would put a far deeper content into the internal evidence than orthodox theology permitted, and, while professing to stand in awe before abstract justice, or before inscrutable will, would really commune with a God of love. Thus, in spite of the error of the head, the gospel will often have accredited itself to the heart by its own light. Chalmers does not keep the internal evidence rigidly subordinate to the external. He rather treats it as an alternative means of producing conviction, which has the advantage of being 'portable.' I think we shall best explain this by the amount of dogmatic belief which was still in the air when Chalmers taught. He still, like his dogmatic predecessors, assumed that any soul who was accessible to the good voices must construe them in the same sense in which he, the teacher, and his forefathers had construed them. And, besides that, in Chalmers himself there was doubtless a true feeling of the intrinsic glory and credibility of the gospel, although the logic of his system hampered his witness-bearing to the truth. But there is evidently something wrong when we are told that intellectual faith may rest *either* upon displays of supernatural power, *or* upon the adaptation of the gospel to our moral necessities. Such heterogeneous processes cannot lead to the same result.

But neither of these proposed sources of conviction agrees precisely with the Reformation principle of the witness of the Holy Spirit. If that (in its orthodox shape) mystical and unfruitful principle is reintroduced, we forsake Chalmers's internal evidences as much as we do his external. We cease to argue, or to persuade, and begin once more to assert. For, on Calvinistic grounds, spiritual certainty seems to be a thing outside of all rational or moral certainty,—independent of those arguments and experiences which produce belief in an intelligible fashion. Really, as the present writer holds, the Spirit of God is immanent in all moral experience, and statements of 'internal evidence' for the gospel are a witness-bearing, in terms of intellect, to an experience which tran-

scends the intellect, to an experience of the whole man. But the assertion of a witness of the Spirit differing in kind from the efficacy of truth and life is futile. If the Chalmers form of stating the internal evidence is inadequate—and it is inadequate—we must seek a remedy, not by retreating into the mists, but by recasting our dogmatic theology so as to bring it into full harmony with Christian experience. If Calvinism were right, and our conviction of the truth of Scripture rested on an incommunicable experience, miraculously conveyed to us direct from heaven, what would become of our apologetics? ‘Don’t talk to me of error,’ the Christian might exclaim; ‘I *see* the truth.’ ‘Don’t talk to me of truth,’ the agnostic might rejoine with equal justice; ‘I see nothing.’ If so, *cadit quaestio*; a result satisfactory enough in the case of the ‘elect,’ but not satisfactory if Christianity is a missionary religion, with universal claims.

There is another drawback to the argumentative value of the ‘peculiar doctrines.’ They presuppose the metaphysics of orthodoxy; soteriology rests upon Christology. Now, when doctrine is used as a self-evidencing power, the moral persuasiveness of the doctrine of Atonement has to carry through, not only that doctrine itself, but the revealed mystery of the holy Trinity. There is a difficulty here, which emerges as soon as we begin to make the transition from external evidence and absolute authority to internal evidence. If ‘the peculiar doctrines of Christianity’ are the grand source of conviction, we must either find some directly religious application for Christology, or else we must insist less strongly upon doctrines which only bear remotely on the religious life. It is more a formal than a material difficulty which we are here charging upon orthodoxy. But all errors, even those which are formal, embarrass the apologist in his work of witness-bearing, and hinder the flow of grace along the channels of religious experience. Men believe in the definitions of the Athanasian creed because they believe in the Atonement. Is that satisfactory?

V.

The next stage in the history of Christian evidences was a very remarkable one. The whole rational fabric, on which it was supposed that religion rested, collapsed beneath men's feet. Natural theology ceased to convince; and miracle, from being the sufficient proof for any number of mysteries, passed into the condition in which we know it so well,—a hindrance rather than a help to faith (yet in the long-run, be it noted, a help to a deeper faith).

The chief source of this change in men's beliefs is Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*; and that not merely from his annihilating criticism of the Wolffian Rational Theology—far more from the general scope of his treatise. The old theory of an objective world of matter external to thought dies under the hands of Kant. And therefore, naturally, the old arguments for a Personal author and architect of that objective external world, Himself objective and external both to it and to us, likewise cease to hold the field. No doubt in Kant's own opinion the real world of unknowable 'things in themselves' survives alongside of the phenomenal world of experience. But you cannot argue to the being of God from either of these Kantian worlds. If the known world is an orderly dream, it implies a human dreamer, not a divine creator. If the real world is outside of experience, we can base no arguments upon it. Still more certainly, if we translate Kant's thought into the language of positive philosophical rationalism, do we see that the old natural theology is at an end. In the course of thought from Locke to Hume, it had made itself plain that the supposed real world, external to thought—if it existed—could not possibly convey an image of itself into the mind of the individual human thinker. Hence Hume, though in half-hearted and dilettante fashion, shut men up to an absolute scepticism. Kant replied by showing that the orderliness of human experience, even if it were an illusion, was not accounted for on Hume's premises. The scattered manifold of sense, dif-

fused in space and time, could not possibly think itself together to a unity of consciousness, unless it were known *a priori* in reference to the unity of the self; nay, more, the manifold could not be known—it could never enter consciousness—unless it were known *as* a manifold, and, therefore, known in relation to and in distinction from the unity of self. Unless the ‘here’ were known as *here* and not there, it was not known. Unless the ‘now’ were known as *now*, and not then—neither the *then* of the past, nor the *then* of the future—experience had not begun. In other words, science having already stripped the real world of all *secondary* qualities, Kant now stripped it of time and space, and left nothing knowable in it from which men could argue to the Being of God. Thus, in defeating philosophical scepticism, Kant undermined the old presuppositions of religious truth.

But human controversies would be far briefer than they are if men thought themselves absolved from scrutinising the course of an antagonist’s argument after they had once indicated dissent from his premises. You like to meet your rival upon his own ground. And, therefore, Kant not merely created a new conception of the world, but subjected the old view of the world’s connection with God to a damaging logical scrutiny. That the ontological argument is not an argument—that the cosmological argument is opposed to its own premises, in asserting uncaused causation on the part of God—that the Design argument suggests a limited, not an infinite being—that the three cannot be strung on one thread, or proved to lead up to one and the same God, unless by the use of the inconclusive ontological argument—these points are triumphantly made out. Kant has not disposed of natural theology, or spoken the last word on the subject. One who halted between two opinions, however great he was, could not do this. And there is more revelation of God in nature than Kant, in his idealistic recoil, was in a position to perceive. But ‘to repeat the old arguments in the old form’ is a waste of breath. Kant has broken them into little bits; and every

one who is competent to discuss the question ought to grant this.

A defence of the process of thought traced in the old Rational Theology has been made by Hegel, and reproduced by several of his disciples. As thus amended, the 'arguments' are no longer arguments; they are not proofs of the existence of a personal God, but reflections of the course of rational thought in man. In fact, Hegelianism, so far as it is true to the real principles of its founder, is apt to frown upon the doctrine of the Divine Personality as a piece of anthropomorphism. In this I venture to think Hegelianism puts itself at issue with the very foundations of Christian faith. Christianity is nothing if we have not a judge and a Father in heaven. But why? On moral grounds. It is not the painter of the butterfly's wing, or the celestial inventor of the human hand, with whom we have to do. We may speculate on a 'great first cause,' but such an abstraction can be no object of worship till it is clothed in moral attributes. Religion is not a 'theory of causation,' else a gale of wind might be worshipped. The Christian God is none other than the God who speaks in conscience. And again, the really religious processes of the human mind are not barely intellectual processes, such as Hegel tried to detect under the imperfectly expressed thoughts of the old rational theology. The Christian religion is pre-eminently a moral process, and does not admit of being—at any rate by us men—reduced to terms of intellect. You have not entered upon the subject of Christianity till you are in the region of moral perception, loving the right and hating the wrong, learning as far as you may the redemptive lessons of life. By that path only can man reach spiritual insight.

Perhaps it may be thought that Kant's influence has little to do with the contemporary aversion to natural theology, at least on our own side of the Channel. That, however, would be a profound mistake. Kant's teaching, or at anyrate its negative portion, has penetrated far and wide. He has made an end, at one blow, both of the old materialism and of the old

natural theology. Herbert Spencer, one of the most influential of living thinkers, though scantily enough imbued with the better elements of Kant's teaching, stands in direct filiation to Kant, and has borrowed from him the assertion that the Absolute is unknowable. Even Positivism itself, the most pretentious and the most Philistine of all competitors in the forum of thought, echoes the parrot-cry, 'we can know only phenomena,' as if any intelligence confined to phenomena could be an intelligence at all, or if it were could possibly know that it was *confined* to phenomena. It is due to Kant that we have to face neither deism nor dogmatic materialism, but agnosticism; and the prevalence of agnosticism warns us that the old Natural Theology is dead. Certainly the production of arguments of the old sort goes on—with much satisfaction, as we must suppose, to the producer, but with no discernible effect on men's thoughts. The values are changed in the minds of men. Even if your arguments seemed to be watertight, they would not tell with the same weight upon men's lives.

But, besides the more speculative bias which disinclines men to accept the arguments of natural theology, science in its special departments has played havoc with the most popular of the old arguments—the argument from design. Darwin, in giving an immense impulse to the theory of organic evolution, has destroyed ten thousand apologetic arguments—in their old form. If I have postulated an immediate Divine interposition to account for the putting together of an organism, and if the man of science is able to prove to me that it has been put together by the operation of general tendencies and laws of nature, then my inference that we have here the very finger of God falls to the ground. And if, for religion's sake, I try to maintain that my old argument is as strong as ever, I am merely quibbling. On the other hand, if the man of science so far forgets himself as to assume that he has disproved religion, he is at least as far in the wrong. Darwinism does not exclude design; but it does not postulate it as the old natural theology did—that is the gist of a great deal

of unprofitable jangling. Religion is not disproved; only one argument for religion is disproved: it remains to ask whether there are not others—nay more, whether that argument was well drawn from the point of view of religion itself. A metaphysician, who has learned from Kant that the old design argument is formally defective, feels much amused when he sees how Darwinism spreads consternation among the apologists. If the old conception was inapplicable to God, may it not be that the theory of evolution will give us a not less certain, and a more tenable view of the Divine operation in nature? God is not immediately or directly revealed in matter; He is revealed under conditions; in Himself He is unconditioned, or conditioned only by His own character, which is Himself; but, in nature, God by His own will works subject to general laws, though it is impossible that they should constitute any mortgage upon God's freedom. Why God creates, and why He creates in such fashion as He does, we can only conjecture. But we can see this—that the fabric of nature, because of its orderliness and subjection to law, constitutes a basis for the attainment of æsthetic and moral ends, and a medium for fellowship between God and man. Apart from the conditioned working of God under natural law, we do not see how there could be any basis for moral communion between man and God. If this be so, we need not assume that God invented snails and toadstools for their own sake, but may rather hold that all individual works of God are incidents in a process, which commends itself as a process, because greater and better results are reached by it than could be reached by any isolated acts whatsoever of almighty 'sovereignty.'

We cannot point to any such outstanding names as those of Kant or Darwin when we turn to the change of men's thoughts in the second department—the department of Christian evidence proper. Yet here the change is quite as marked. For one thing, indeed, the dying down of the old natural theology must tell upon the old evidences. If we have not *a priori*

certainty of a supreme and personal First Cause, then the supernatural, as contained in miracle, does not work as a proof in the old fashion. Whatever the different reasons for a change in men's thoughts, men are not often now convinced by miracle, as was the late Mr. Bowen of Bombay. The modern Christian is almost as much puzzled by such a history as the modern agnostic can be. The character of Christ has more and more moved into the centre of Christian evidences, and physical miracle—rightly—is put into a subordinate place, and is studied in the light of Christ's character. Physical miracle never was more than an element in a complex process of witness-bearing; and the stress ought never to have been laid on anything but the character of Christ. Those who 'desired a sign' were not true Christians in the Master's own judgment. Hence we are not dismayed when miracle ceases to convince, or even begins to stagger men. It is well that they should know what is the real proof of Christianity—not His miracles, but Christ Himself. Only we must take care that our dogmatic theology gives a faithful report of the Christian position.

Kant, who destroyed the old natural theology, stated a new moral argument for the being of a personal God. This argument, in so far as it proceeds on moral grounds, is formally correct—as Ritachl¹ has observed. But, in so far as Kant's argument does not rest on really moral but on heteronomous considerations, it deserves to fail. Virtue and happiness must tally, he thinks; they do not tally in this life; they must tally in a future life; and, as the prospect before us is one of indefinite approach to a never-reached goal, the future life must be infinitely long = eternal. Finally, God is the guarantee of this future and eternal life, which is to redress the anomalies and supply the defects of the present earthly scene. But such an argument is more hedonist than moral. A truly moral argument, or rather witness-bearing, for God would not make God stand aloof, legal fashion, from the moral life,

¹ *Rechtfertigung*, vol. iii. p. 186, sec. 29.

Our moral relation to God is an intellectual one;
our moral relation to man is an indirect one. Thus
Xv. What is the value of the moral? Not God-ethics.
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or draw near only in order to reward or punish. In the view of genuine Christian morality, God dwells in us, and we in God; God animates every impulse towards what is right, or good, or loving, or holy. Besides, Kant has indicated a new *natural* religion; a thing incapable of growth or development. If religion stood thus aloof from development, it would be the most unnatural thing in the world. The true religion of Christ has been developed by a historical process. Because it has been given in history, it is natural; because it is natural, it has a history. Though Christ is not the result of a development, He is its interpretation and its crown; and, as Christians, it belongs to us during the Christian ages to develop and to apply to the world the mind of Christ.

VI.

Our duty of witness-bearing begins with the revelation of God; and the revelation of God begins in nature. We ought to have a natural theology, if it be recognised as incomplete in itself, and as serving to lead men up to Christian theology. The Christian God has moral attributes, and reveals Himself to the heart. But He is God; and, before we can appreciate Divine love, we must know the Divine power. Of this all nature is full. There is a very imperfect, very dim revelation of God's moral qualities in the material creation; but it reveals power, and wisdom, and unity of plan; and all these are elements in the thought of God. Even the scepticism of the present day repudiates the old materialism. It is absurd to explain the cosmos by chance. There is a mystery behind nature, an 'Unknowable'—one throughout all nature, sole, and incomparable to any creature. The question which divides faith and unbelief is whether we have any right to impute moral qualities to this Unknowable, who is confessedly manifest in nature, yet still unsearchable and past finding out.

If our sceptical critics are idealist philosophers, and hold the position that all that exists is reason, or thought, then our appeal to them is so much the stronger. We also hold

that nature is a phenomenal or conditioned manifestation of the Divine reason. And, by explaining matter in terms of thought, our critics must mean that the unknown author of nature is that very Reason in archetype, whose image we bear as created rational beings. What hinders faith in these critics is a tendency to subjective idealism,—a tendency to regard rational experience as only an orderly dream, not a communion of the human subject with the objective thoughts of God. Subjective idealism is probably bad philosophy. But that is not why we object to it; nor ought we to offer a merely philosophical correction. We object to subjective idealism because it destroys the basis of religion; and our argument against it is a moral one, drawn from practical considerations. Man's life is not a dream, orderly or disorderly; or, if it be a dream, the dreamer is not man the individual. Human life is a scene of action; man is not merely the subject of intellectual experience, but the agent in moral transactions—the doer of good or evil. Hence, practically and morally, we must regard the world not merely as frozen intellect, or as an automatic thought-process proceeding from God, but as a will-process, limited and overruled, no doubt, yet committed to our own hands in a most true sense,—a process in which we can co-operate with God, or fight against Him. Hence the last word of purely natural theology teaches us to think of God not only as the inscrutable author of nature,—of its order, of its loveliness, of its terror—but as the Father of human wills, and as the framer of the scene in which our wills play their part. While it does not give us proofs, natural theology, in its narrow sense, gives us suggestions.

A second stage in our theological ascent we may call moral theology. It starts from the moral nature of man, and postulates the personality of God. Even natural theology suggests to us a personal God. Unprejudiced human thought can never admit that it is a reasonable view of causation to hold that conscious reason proceeds from the unconscious. But the mere suggestion of a personal God, made by our intellectual faculty,

is not the proper ground of our faith in God. Morality apart, God's personality would be a question of curiosity for the metaphysical schools. But, when we learn the elements of morality,—when we recognise what we are, and what our life essentially is,—then the question of God's personality becomes one of the most vital and intimate of all religious questions. For then, in a word, we begin to know what religion is. And above the moral sphere there is no knowable or imaginable higher region, where moral distinctions might cease to hold good. God is the righteous one; our highest praise, our deepest wisdom, must ever return to this point.

It may no longer be possible for us to argue that the material universe has been created simply for the service of man, as our forefathers used to hold. That is put out of the question by what we know of the immensity of the material creation. But, in practice, we take for granted that every part of nature, which we can control, was made for our use. We act as lords of creation. The presupposition, the unifying principle, of our behaviour in the world is, that persons have absolute rights over things,—that things have no rights as against persons. It is gratuitous irreverence to insinuate that human conduct proceeds only upon the right of the strongest, or that our attitude towards things, as distinguished from our attitude towards persons, is not susceptible of moral justification.

For, while it claims that the rational being is an end in itself, human conduct is not a lawless thing. Man acts as the ruler of nature, with the free consent of his conscience; but he knows that he is not supreme. Whether he hears the voice of conscience distinctly or indistinctly,—whether he obeys it or disobeys it,—whether he interprets it wisely, or misinterprets it,—man knows that he is subject to a law which he did not make, which he can indeed violate, but which he cannot alter. Duty is the most significant factor in human experience. We may differ as to what constitutes duty; we may accept some non-moral standard as giving us a calculus to work with, or even as giving us an ultimate interpretation of duty. Lotze's

theory that virtue is benevolence approaches the first of these positions; utilitarianism occupies the second. But every earnest mind must feel—whatever its professed ethical theory—that benevolence is good in quite a different sense from that in which it is good for producing a certain amount of pleasure or happiness. Equal pleasure produced without benevolence would not be an equal good from the moral point of view,—would not be morally good at all. It was not an intuitionist who wrote of true happiness that it ‘often brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good.’¹ For my own part, I believe that any attempt to make ‘heteronomous’ standards serve even as a calculus of virtue is altogether futile. When we learn the distinction between right and wrong, we learn a new language—the idiom of which cannot be reproduced in any other dialect whatsoever. It is our place in the world as moral agents, subject to the law of duty, which enables us to understand the moral experience of others, or to hold communion with other moral beings, human or Divine. But, while I believe this, I am glad to think that most men are deeper than their creeds, and that human nature does not lay aside its moral quality because men profess to regard their kind merely as gregarious animals, with an unusually complex organisation. The moral life of the community and the moral nature of the individual persist in putting moral content into the life of the man who, in words, denies the mysterious sacredness of obligation. He who is truly diligent ‘to frame his life according to the light of nature and the law of that religion he doth profess’ is certainly far nearer God than the man who says ‘Lord, Lord’ with edifying orthodoxy, but does not obey the will of God. Still, a bad theory will produce a dwarfed virtue. If we have largely escaped hitherto in our own country—if unbelief, religious and philosophical, is full of saving enthusiasm and healthful shame—that is due to the fact that the public mind has been steeped in a religious

¹ *Romola*.

morality, imperfectly interpreted by creeds, but powerfully commended by Christian lives. In point of fact, if we are to have a philosophy of morals at all, we can only follow Kant and his idealist successors. Morality is autonomy—self-government—freedom. We did not make the law of duty, yet it is the law of our own nature; that is why we never can alter it, or escape from it. And it is the law of our own nature, not in so far as we have a particular constitution as animals, but in so far as we have a rational constitution as created spirits. In any world, or in any transformation of our outward sensuous being, spite must be evil, and generosity good,—self-indulgence must be evil, and self-control good. Conscience is *practical reason*, and human life is an opportunity of having our nature conformed to the law of conscience. Hence—accept the theory, or admit the facts in spite of your bad theory—all earnest minds must feel that doing right leads to blessedness, and wrong-doing involves a curse; that doing right clears the moral vision, and doing wrong dims it; so that both the conditions and the fruits of the moral struggle are known to the good man, while the unfaithful servant sinks into an ‘agnostic.’

When we turn from the inner world, where conscience shows itself imperative but not compulsive, to the outer world of man's experience, we find a partial, though only a partial, confirmation of the moral view of life. As Butler says: ‘The principles and beginnings of a moral government over the world may be discerned, notwithstanding and amidst all the confusion and disorder of it’;¹ or, as Arnold says, there is ‘a law or force, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness.’ If we might believe in immortality, the law of retribution would at once become almost exactly true; give character time to work itself out, and judgment would complete itself. But, from the point of view of man's natural knowledge, and apart from historical revelation, immortality is a spiritual craving or moral postulate, but not a certain fact. Hence we find only a

¹ *Analogy*, Part I. Ch. iii.

partial verification of the claims of conscience in what we see of the course of Providence round about us. And our probation requires that this should be so. To be free, we must not only have the formal disposal of our lives, but must be kept from being overborne by imperious and irresistible motives. Perplexed as the moral life is, we can see that it would not be moral at all were it wholly unperplexed.

Thus our moral theology ends in postulates. We find that there is a voice within us, which we all know we ought to obey. which grows clearer and wiser if we do obey it, less distinct and less certain if we disobey it. It teaches us to believe that human life is a process of moral retribution and moral training; and to a certain extent our observation shows this to be the case, though only to a certain extent. If immortality were revealed to us, then the moral anomalies of providence would almost entirely disappear. And, if there is a voice, however broken and marred, waxing and waning, which speaks to us of absolute good and absolute evil, of an absolute end in human life, of perfect blessedness and utter self-destruction, may we not well assume that this voice is an utterance of the Mystery behind nature,—half revealed in His material works, but there half-concealed, and absolutely (though in part and by slow degrees) revealed to us here, and here only—more and more revealed as we are able and willing to bear the light—reason to reason, moral to the moral in us, Spirit to spirit? In short, a personal God—the synthesis of nature and conscience—the explanation of man's moral instincts—the guarantee of immortality—is the last postulate of moral theology. And this postulate is moral. We *ought* to do right; the inexorableness of that law is only intelligible if the universe is pervaded by the conscious moral will and purpose of God Almighty. If we may so say, there *ought* to be a God. And there *ought* to be an immortal life—not only for our happiness, or for the punishment of our sin, but in order that our souls, made in the image of the infinite God, may have room to expand.

✓ The third stage in our theological ascent we may call Christian Theism.

Here first of all we have a revelation of the personal God in Jesus Christ. He tells us that He is come from God. He claims to be Messiah; and by Messiah He will have us understand a Divine being, the Son of God. Though we have never seen God for ourselves, we, or men of our race, have seen, heard, and handled Christ; and Christ tells us that there is a living God, and that Christ's own human life on earth has been lived by faith in God. He even directs men away from Himself, to the Father: 'none is good save one, that is God.' Nor is it only in what Christ says that we have a new revelation of God. His words rest upon evidence, not upon authority. There is in His life, by almost universal confession, an unconceived image of moral perfection, an unconceived spiritual originality and moral beauty. He tells us that that is God. Having seen Christ, we have seen the Father.

Secondly: there is in Christ a revelation of sin. This was not in itself new to the Jewish world, which had enjoyed the Divine preparation for Christ, although even to Jewish faith the scope of man's sinfulness was startlingly revealed, and its universality strongly emphasised, by the character and the sufferings of Christ. To the Gentile world—i.e. to mankind at large—the revelation was almost wholly new. The sense of sin had never been deep in the Pagan world; and any sense of sin that once had been developed had very much died away again. Yet every earnest moral experience had in it the contents which Christ's Spirit develops into a penitent confession of sin. For our present purpose, as students of the evidence for the gospel, we are interested in the fact, that a Christian's conviction of sin makes him feel how inevitable it is that by nature he should be ignorant of God and estranged from his own chief good. If wrong-doing dims the spiritual vision, then sinners cannot but be blind to the things of the spiritual life; and all men have sinned. Christians appeal in support of this statement to a universal moral experience.

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They make no attempt to give a speculative explanation of the origin of sin. Yet, in developing this conviction of the guilt and blameworthiness of our own moral ignorance, how great a revelation has been made by Christ!

It may be observed that we have now mentioned two explanations of the ignorance and uncertainty of men regarding moral things. The first is teleological; the second is causal. The first holds good apart from sin; the second fastens upon the moral results of sin. We are in the twilight in order that we may choose God freely; we are in the twilight because we have turned away from God. But are not these two explanations incompatible? Or, at any rate, does not one render the other superfluous? I am firmly persuaded that both are true, and that we shall misconstrue human life and Christian hope unless we include in our beliefs the whole of God's witness to man's strange state—a state of probation and opportunity, clogged by sin—a state of sin and misery, yet a state of probation, cheered by the promise of God's grace. All probation need not be so dark and so embarrassed as is the probation of sinful men,—of men who (mysterious though the saying is) are encompassed with radical evil. Yet not even for us is life other than a moral discipline, a moral opportunity, a realm of hope. The world is full of God's justice and mercy. To deny that life is retributive would be shallow folly. To deny that life is redemptive would be to slander God.

Translating into experimental language the doctrine that man's ignorance of God is due to man's own guilt, we infer that an unfallen being, whose life was sweet and pure at the core, would have found reason enough, from the revelation of nature and conscience, to believe in a personal and righteous God, on the chance—with the hope—of meeting Him, face to face, behind the veil of death. Experimentally we can find no ground for holding that sin is the physiological cause of death, though we can well discern that nothing but sin makes death terrible.

The third element in Christian Theism is the revelation of

God as love. Compared with the revelation of God in conscience, this is a higher reading of that moral being which conscience postulates as lying behind all metaphysical or physical wonders. When brought into connection with the revelation of sin, this revelation of love shows us how, in spite of sin, there remains 'a hope for us in God';¹ for, though God's condemnation of sin is righteous, and divine, and glorious, God's work of redemption is more righteous, and more divine, and more glorious. In revealing God, Christ interprets human sorrow, in all its darkness, as the work of God's Fatherly providence. And, along with the doctrine of God, Christ raises the doctrine of duty to a higher intensity. These two must always be in equilibrium. No one can know the righteousness of God except he is himself submissive to the law of righteousness; just as no one can permanently follow after righteousness unless he discovers that righteousness has a source higher than himself in the bosom of God. And so here; no one can know God's love unless he is himself walking in love; and we love, because He first loved us. You cannot get the benefits of Christ crucified unless you are denying yourself and taking up your cross daily; nor can you drag along your cross unless you are lifted above yourself by the faith of God's redeeming love, that has borne the cross for you. Those who live under the law and not under grace see before them a definite goal, though it strangely eludes them as they approach it. 'This do,' says the law, and then be free. God 'challenges a special propriety in the seventh day of the week,' says the legalist, but 'allows us six days for our own employments.' He who is under law to Christ has no such illusions. He knows that the claims of duty are infinite and inexhaustible; but yet they are not grievous to him; it is his meat to do the will of God. He has been placed under a transcendent obligation to Christ; and his personal relation of fellowship with his Master is developed in the life of obedience.

Now this is the internal evidence of the gospel. Christianity

¹ M'Leod Campbell.

deserves to be true. No one could invent such a doctrine of God as is asserted, and exhibited, by Jesus Christ; no one but the holiest and best could think of such a standard of duty as Christ's—and Christ carries back all His teaching to the revelation of His Father. Christianity is the noblest and worthiest thought of God embodied in historical facts; the Word made flesh. But further, we only know this internal evidence truly when we live lives conformed to the rule of Christ. Christianity is not a speculation but a 'way'; it is light and life—truth to direct us, life to enable us. From the sense of duty onwards, all moral and spiritual revelations have a peculiar personal cogency. We are assured of duty, convicted of guilt; we have the joy of forgiveness, the sense of guidance: of these no one can rob us. Guidance in duty is not simply God's making detailed disclosures, from time to time, of what we ought to do; still less is it simply God's making us happy when we do right. It is the sense of our own efforts being taken up into a higher and holier purpose; it is the assurance that, through us and in spite of us, God is fulfilling Himself; the sense that—though we cannot see to the end of God's ways—life is a moral process and a redemptive power.

Such knowledge is the witness of the Holy Spirit. To suppose that it comes to us without God is atheism.

The ~~fourth~~ element in Christian Theism is miracle. Altogether subordinate as it is, it is nevertheless a fit confirmation, in the phenomenal sphere, of what is revealed in the moral sphere. It is easy to say, Thy sins are forgiven; but, that we may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sin, He adds a sign. I have no wish to toss the sceptic backwards and forwards, from miracle to moral evidence, and back to miracle. Only we cannot allow the sceptic to cut us off in detail. All we ask is, that he should take the whole Christian position together. It is not *chiefly* a doctrine of physical marvels. 'Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake.' But there are miracles—signs—tokens of God's presence and power in a

region where our hopes are less likely to run away with our judgment. It is not any and every miracle that we urge on men, but miracle associated with the character of Christ. It is not any and every impressive moral agency that we urge on men, but His who wielded the most astonishing powers, yet bent them all in subjection to a moral and gracious purpose.

Hence we do not wish in dealing with miracles, any more than we wish in dealing with any other fragment of Christian evidence, to draw out a mathematical proof of the truth of the gospel. Miracles are useful if they bring a man face to face with Christ. If they do more they are misleading and hurtful.

§ 212 X | I may believe in Christ's resurrection as I believe in Julius Cæsar's murder, upon bare historical probability; and what am I the better of either one or the other? But, if I accept Christ's resurrection as an evidence of the character of God my Father, and as a token of His working, in character, for the redemption of His lost children, including my lost self—then the resurrection of Christ ceases to be a mere historical accident; it becomes God's supreme appeal to me, working in me to call out and strengthen my faith in the personal moral purpose behind nature and history—in the gracious redemptive purpose that rules nature and history. And, if this faith does not make me a better man, it ought to do so.

The peculiar fitness of miracle as part of the gospel witness for God is due to the fact that faith must be supernatural. God is law, but God is more than law; He is personality: He is expressed in nature, but not exhausted in it. We have to do with a living God. And further, we need a future life. God is educating us that we may grow up into the consciousness of Himself, and of the full purpose of His love. Christianity without heaven is mutilated; Christianity without God is a lie; and therefore non-miraculous Christianity is a perverse imagination. Physical miracles by themselves would not indeed prove to us God and heaven. But, in their own place, in the historical series of God's moral self-revelations, physical miracles form an element in the proof. They are tokens in

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confirmation of Christ's words—the appropriate physical signs which ought to accompany such pledges and promises. We do not believe in the doctrines for the sake of the miracles, nor yet in the miracles for the sake of the doctrines. We believe in both for the sake of both. They form parts of God's complex reasonable appeal to our consciences.

The fourth and last stage in our theological ascent is Christianity proper. If the gospel leads us to believe in God, we also believe in Christ.

The place held, as we have already seen, by miracle points to this conclusion. Physical manifestations of the supernatural not only attest to us a God above nature, or a life beyond death, but also attest the presence and work in the world of God's only-begotten Son. Yet towards Christ, as towards God, miracle is only a subordinate attestation.

The first ground of our religious faith in Christ is the fact that saving faith in God is impossible apart from Christ. We have no sure knowledge of the character of God except in the character of His Son. Hence Christian revelation is inseparable from the revealer. In other words, Christ Himself is part of the revelation; He bears witness to Himself. The New Testament is perfectly plain in telling us that Christ is not a phenomenal representation, but an absolute image of God, and the only way of approach to Him.

But God in Christ is not only showing Himself to us; He is working a work upon us. And Christian faith recognises the gift, made to us in Jesus Christ, as the greatest of all God's works. Here is the second ground of our religious faith in Christ.

Now, God works in many ways. One cannot have any sort or degree of faith without coming to recognise God's hand everywhere in nature and history. It is not, then, a peculiarity of Christian belief, in contradistinction to disbelief or half-belief, that we recognise Divine operations as well as Divine revelations. No; but it is the peculiarity of true belief that we confess God's working concentrated in Jesus Christ—God's

personal presence in Him—God's imparting of Himself to us through Christ. In regard to the knowledge of God, no sincere half-believer can deny that Jesus Christ was a special channel of Divine revelation. But true belief confesses the same thing as to God's gift of Himself, or as to God's working. It goes further: it confesses Christ, not as *a* channel, but as *the* avenue of communication between God and men. Christ Himself taught us this, speaking of Himself (in the language laid to His hand by God's providence), as the 'Messiah,' but interpreting Messiahship as only God in the flesh could dare to do. It is to Christ's work that God will have respect in all His gifts of grace; it is by the knowledge of Christ, and by conscious trust in Him, that the world at large, and individual souls under the ordinary course of God's providence, shall alone attain to moral victory. Christ works, as I have tried to point out elsewhere, in many ways; by creating a Church and a Christian community—by giving us laws, example, impulse—by inviting, over and above all these, a personal faith in Him, and by promising the succour of His personal presence through the Spirit. These, however, do not constitute our present point. Our point is, that Christ works in the world—a work no other can share. So Christianity has taught from its origin. Men who dislike these claims may abandon Christianity, if they feel compelled to escape at all costs from Christ's claims. But no men have a right to remodel Christianity, or to alter the terms of the Divine message.

In Christ we obtain the universal elements of religious blessedness, though by a particular channel. He restores the revelation which sin had darkened. And here, in the region of will, He restores to us our moral victory, through the renewed indwelling of God, from whom sin had estranged us. Therefore the faith of redeemed sinners is a faith, not only in the character of God, but in Christ as the agent of God's character. Faith is belief both in God and in Christ; in God's Fatherly love; in Christ's historical work, as the finished realisation of God's redeeming purpose; in present communion

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with God and Christ, on the ground of Christ's historical work, through the agency of Christ's historical work. Faith lays hold first of the eternal; then of the historical; then of the continuous present. It is properly belief, but a belief involving trust and the consent of the will—a belief, also, which is inseparable from repentance. The evidence on which our faith proceeds is the moral authoritativeness of those views of God revealed as facts in the work of Christ. Revelation, we may say, is not dogma, but history. God is the revealed, and Christ is the revelation. The Bible simply tells us what Christ's life showed Him to be, and what the first disciples proved or found Him to be after His Exaltation, during their own Christian career. But, if revelation is history, it is history as interpreted by the moral judgment of believing men. Although the facts by which it operates are attested past events, revelation is a continuous process, by which human minds are awakened to the knowledge of God, and sin, and Christ. Revelation is steeped in moral experience. Try to get it dry and naked, as a bare logical phenomenon—and, lo! you have lost it. Dogmatist or apologist can only bear witness to it, in approximate, inadequate, intellectual forms. For instance; every Christian writer will do his best to say what revelation is, what the gospel is. But God forbid that any one should treat his stammering paragraphs as if they were equivalent to the thing itself. It is in the moral struggle—in repentance, prayer, aspiration, thanksgiving—that we have the presence and the witness of God's Spirit. But the moral struggle is not necessarily bound up with any views as to (e.g.) the ultimate penalty of sin. Faith lays hold of God, and of His salvation—confesses our guilt, stands in awe of Christ's judgment, hopes in His mercy. These things, then, are attested by His Spirit; but things which do not enter into the substance of the Christian life are no part of the Divinely attested message.

VII.

Belief in Jesus Christ as part of our belief in God is exposed to much hostile criticism at the present day. There is a disposition to weed out all contingent historical facts from the content of Christian faith, and to confine faith to eternal ideal principles. We shall be told that it is impossible for God to concentrate Himself in a single historical individual, even in a Jesus of Nazareth. We shall be told that men, who wish a solid basis for the moral life, confine themselves to the certainty of duty,—or possibly manage to feel certain of God,—but turn away from such uncertainties as a sinless Saviour or a resurrection to immortality, and from the vain distractions which such thoughts breed.

These are, I think, the two leading arguments against the historical element in Christian faith—a speculative argument, and a practical.

Now Christians do not pretend to bring the kingdom of God under any *a priori* law. We might not have anticipated how God would disclose Himself, or on what conditions He would communicate Himself to us, for our redemption. Yet it is obvious to remark that *a priori*, man, the image of God, is suited to be the vehicle of Divine incarnation. And we are called upon to bear witness to certain facts, which we have heard and believed, by which also we are saved; and it seems to us to argue no small presumption when our critics tell us God cannot have been in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. I am not fond of arguments from God's omnipotence. But our evidence here is not merely the omnipotence of God; it is a long experience of God's grace. Here we have to do with Christ, confessedly the greatest moral influence in history; and Christ tells us that He is God's Son, the last and highest of God's messengers. In that faith Christ finished His work. By that faith the Church was created and has been nourished. Is it not strange to be told that Christ was no doubt a good and holy man, but that His ruling idea of a

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special Divine interposition in His life was a mere error of the *Zeitgeist*?

II Further, we meet with a direct negative the assertion that contingent historical facts are irrelevant to faith. The evidence for historical facts makes them morally congruous to our religious belief. If you could pack morality into an *a priori* formula, you would unfit it for the reason of man. We live by probability; we are saved by hope. Both morality and Christianity tell us, that by doing God's will we learn His doctrine—that by following Christ we gain the light of life—that we are the subjects of a moral process, which is accompanied by a corresponding growth or decline in our moral perceptions. If it please God, there is no reason why the recognition of the historical Christ as our God and Saviour should not be part of the development of our moral perceptions under the discipline of life. Belief in *a priori* truth has no moral quality in it; Euclid does not train the character. Man's experience rests upon a basis of intellect—upon the perception of necessary truths; but man's free will acts and grows in an upper region of contingency, through moral perception, not through metaphysical certainty. Idealist religions work with only half of man, and with the wrong half.

III Still further, we point out that no man is or can be independent of the historical process which lies behind him. The half-believer is himself the result of a Christian history. He will admit this; the question which divides us from him is the question, what elements are involved in that history. Now assuming for the moment that we are right—assuming that Christ is Divine—we point out that the earnest half-believer enjoys some or many of the benefits of Christ's redemption, even while he misconstrues it, and reduces it to the level of any other historical phenomenon. And we also point out that God, in charging the life of Jesus Christ with such tremendous spiritual forces, sent redemption into the world upon moral lines, making it work morally, socially, historically, by the growth of character, as other moral forces work. Of course, in hold-

ing this, we utterly repudiate the predestinarian view, that birth in a heathen land denotes the soul's sovereign preterition by the Most High. For, in that view, God is not really working on moral lines at all. And our fundamental certainty is that God is moral in all His ways; although 'the end of the Lord' be still hidden from us in mystery.

So much in self-defence. But the critic's idea, of being *safe* by believing in duty and in duty alone, is eminently open to attack. He must be a skilful or a lucky man who manages to outmanœuvre the doubting fiend. Impossible to doubt of duty? Why, it is possible to doubt anything, your own existence even! Assuredly, if you are to have any moral life at all, you must believe *some* things which are open to doubt! If so, what possible limit can you set to your faith, other than that of believing as much as moral evidence calls upon you to believe?

Or, say you succeed in living on a half-faith. I am sure the thing is *a priori* possible; I am sure that, in rare cases, it has happened. I am not so sure that it is possible in the case of one who petulantly turns away from God's fuller revelations in order to escape the 'growing pains' of doubt, and fear, and hope. But, even if you did succeed, not many minds could breathe in so thin an atmosphere. 'Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?' If indeed it were *knowledge*, the question might be at an end. But, if it is only thy distaste for doubtful revelations and uncertain hopes—this is not enlightenment but selfishness. And no one can be saved selfishly. Salvation is to seek 'the profit of many, that they may be saved.'

Finally; the point to which we are working up all through these retorts is this, that you have no right to ignore God's revelation. We do not threaten the inconvenient consequences of infidelity, as our forefathers might have done. What ultimately can disadvantage any man in God's universe, except sin? Or what ultimately can profit any man, in God's universe, except faithfulness to duty? Away with those

hedonistic motives for the moral and Christian life. It is not true that we learn to know the right by discovering its superior expediency. Such a process of reasoning is intellectually thinkable but morally impossible. If that were our way of approaching truth, how should we ever tell the difference between the right and the barely expedient? It is with our consciences that God deals; it is 'to every man's conscience' that the Christian advocate must 'commend' his message. What the gospel offers you is new light upon duty; new strength to discharge it; new light upon sin; redemption from sin; a disclosure of the personal God, the author of nature and the author of conscience, as present with you, in virtue of the mission of His Son Jesus Christ, by His Holy Spirit. If the gospel claims are true, you are guilty of irreverence and ingratitude in neglecting Christianity. You have no right to be indifferent to such things. He who wishes to believe is at heart a believer; he who wilfully ignores Jesus Christ is at heart an enemy of Christ.

An objection may be made to us from the other side. We have alleged that the Church has ceased to be an absolute, and that the Bible must cease to be an absolute, in order that Jesus Christ may be the absolute revelation of God and Lord of men. But why, some anxious theologian may ask, should the process stop here? Why should not the Deist proceed to extrude Jesus Christ in order that God may be all in all?—Why, indeed, if the Christian revelation be incomplete and the Christian religion illusory? But, if God is in Christ—and Christ says He is—will our dealing with Christ more directly, without the mediation of priest or apostle, teach us to grow weary of the one mediator between God and man? Let there be no mistake here. The Church and the Bible are good and holy; but Christ is infinitely above them both. The supremacy of the Church over men's thoughts was a piece of illogical logic. The supremacy of the Bible was in no better case; but the supremacy of Christ is Christianity itself,—part of the core and kernel of the gospel. Other things must 'decrease' that

Christ may be greater. Our absolute dependence on Him—dying to our old life in baptism with Him; nourished for a new life by His body and blood; seeing God through His eyes; breathing His spirit—that is the Christianity of the New Testament; and outside of Christ we have no God. Schleiermacher and others have spoken of the possibility that we might exchange Christianity for a higher religion, and have told us that Christians must be glad to do so. Yes, certainly, if such a thing were possible; but it is of the essence of Christianity that such a thing is impossible; and to talk of a better master than Christ is treason. ‘Once in the end of the world hath He appeared.’ ‘God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.’ Christianity claims the whole future. The world’s drama is to be wound up, not by a possible or problematical higher revelation of God, but by the return of ‘this same Jesus.’ The finality of the gospel is at least one of the truths intimated to us in the *Vorstellung* of the Second Advent.

There is one other sort of objection to our system that may be noticed here. It is the hyper-Calvinistic objection; that which reduces the internal evidence for the gospel to an incommunicable, mysterious, subjective certainty. In this form, the internal evidence is a bare report of a certain kind of religious experience. Once the soul was blind, cold, dead; now, without merit or work of its own, God has brought it into peace, and into the knowledge of His salvation bestowed through Christ. What He has done for us, God may do for others; but without that nothing avails. And it is not for one so marvellously, so undeservedly blessed, to ask why God gives His salvation or why He limits it.

Such theology is a faithful report of a devout experience. But it rests on a narrow experience; Christian life contains much more than that. This theology leaves us no basis for an appeal to non-Christians. But we know there is such a basis; we know that all men are moral beings, and that conscience is the voice of God’s Spirit, and virtue His work. Men are

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responsible as well as dependent on grace. Therefore we refuse to be checked by the half-truth of a rigidly Calvinistic experience of redeeming grace.

Let it be noticed that this objection is introduced here because the evidence of experience, even in its most cramped Calvinistic form, does not correspond to the supposed attestation by the Holy Spirit of the detailed letter of Scripture. Nothing in experience really answers to that. There is (given its presuppositions) such a thing as *experience* of irresistible grace and of limited redemption. There is no experience of the self-evident infallibility of Scripture.

VIII.

Having seen, so far as we are able, what Christian faith is, we proceed to inquire how faith is related to Scripture, and what is the function of God's written Word in the Christian life.

In nature we have a revelation of power, in conscience a revelation of righteousness, and in Christ a revelation of love and redemption. In nature we find suggestions of God; in conscience, the postulate of God; in Christ, the affirmation of God. The lower elements of revelation are all but lost apart from Christ; but Christ restores them to their true meaning; and, in having Christ, we have God and His forgiveness. But all moral revelation is twofold—a revelation of grace and of duty; a revelation of moral forces above us, and of moral obligations resting on us. We know by means of conscience the imperativeness of duty; and, as revelation widens the range of the known moral forces, and of the correlative duty incumbent on us, conscience bestows upon all the wider range its own imperative sanction, hailing each duty, and each revelation of God and Christ, with the same reverent faith. Any belief which does not rest on a perception of the inherent moral probability of the truth is an empty opinion, wholly different from Christian faith.

Now the proper function of the Bible is to testify of Christ;

and first of all by recording the facts of His life, death, and resurrection.

Thus the Bible is unique among books, because Christ is unique among the sons of men. If men antiquate the Christian religion, they will also antiquate the Bible; but, as long as Christ's Spirit verifies Him to men as God's highest revelation and supreme gift, so long the Bible will rank as the best of books. Its pre-eminence does not consist in its beautiful poetry, or in its graceful narratives, or even in its piercing moral precepts. It has all these; but it does not take its stand upon its literary merit—from a literary point of view, it contains bad workmanship as well as good. Not even its moral pre-eminence describes the Bible's true claim upon us, though that comes nearer the mark. All through the Bible's moral teaching there runs an intense religious faith,—in the Old Testament, faith in the God of Israel; in the New Testament, faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, the New Testament (for Christianity is a missionary religion) professes to give the grounds by which all men may be convinced of the truth of God's revelation in Christ, and of the reality of God's redemptive presence in Him. These are really the supremest of all facts, or the emptiest of all dreams. And I do not see how any one, unless he be in the attitude of one seeking for light, can bear to use the moral teaching of the Bible, if its supernatural part is fabulous in his opinion,—~~if there is no living God, if Jesus was a dreamer, and if He went by the cross to the endless sleep of death.~~ We do not need the Bible to suggest God to us; nature does that. We do not need the Bible to postulate God for us; conscience does that. We need to have God exhibited to us—to have God proved to our consciences. Christ does that; and the Bible does its part in that work by telling us of Christ. That it may do this, the Bible record need not be infallible or exhaustive. It is enough if we have a sufficient record of Christ. But a record of Christ written by those who have no faith in Him must be false *a priori*. We hear the argument used—in all good faith—the

fourth Gospel cannot be by John, because it tells of a resurrection at Bethany; 1st Peter cannot be by a companion of Jesus, because it speaks of His sinlessness; we begin to hear it said, the Apocalypse cannot be by John Zebedee, since the seer beholds the slain lamb in the midst of the throne of heaven. Such is the *a priori* logic of disbelief. It confirms what we have said—that there is no possible neutrality in this matter. It is cast in our teeth that the Gospels were written by disciples, who had a tendency to accept exaggerated accounts of their Master's greatness. That tendency may possibly have operated to some small extent. But the opposite bias would, in the opinion of Christians, have been incomparably more fatal. Therefore we say with all confidence, that the Gospels are to us inspired books, not merely because they give what a cool-headed indifferent spectator might call a sufficient account of the wonderful life of Jesus, but because they give a sufficient account of that life as it appeared to those who perceived that Jesus was Christ. If, in reading the Gospels, we see the same thing, that is the witness of God's Spirit. 'These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life through His name.'

I cannot sufficiently emphasise my conviction, that we shall make no headway in vindicating the Bible except we connect it with Christ. That is what is distinctive in the Bible,—it is the only original source for the knowledge of God in Christ. Christ is the revelation: the Bible is the medium by which the revelation reaches us. All other merits that we may claim, however justly, on behalf of the Bible, are only prolegomena to its real claim,—that it enshrines God's last message, God's highest gift. Let us get face to face with Christ in our apologetic. Faith in Him saves a man. And the moral conviction that God is in Christ gives the one true spiritual certainty—the witness of the Spirit—to the gospel message. This certainty does not attach to details. We cannot make our moral emotions guarantee the details, either of the text of Scripture, or of the narrative. Historical truth rests on historical testimony!

criticism must clear the issue by its own methods; and we can afford, if necessary, to see much narrative detail cut away. But, when historical investigation has done its work, this issue remains;—all men agree that Jesus lived, preached, suffered, claimed to be Messiah, claimed to work miracles, claimed that He should rise from the dead. There may be some obscure points, but the outline is distinct. Only, some accept His claim, and some deny it. When we weigh these alternatives, moral probability has to be reckoned. And in that region the humblest soul armed with sincerity and purity is as wise as the most learned.

The second element in Scripture consists of the bulk of the New Testament—mainly epistolary matter. These books are written by men, sharers of our faith in Christ, pioneers in the Christian race, who stood nearer His creative influence than we do. Thus our Bible shows us, not the bare facts only of redemption and revelation, but typical examples of the way in which a Christian use should be made of these facts. Some New Testament books may not be written by their professed or traditional authors, yet may be edifying. We may even doubt whether certain books quite deserve a place in the canon—*e.g.* 2 Peter; or possibly we may think that other books might have been included—*e.g.* 1 Clement. It is hard to accept the idealising view of the formation of the canon. I cannot feel certain that either an exact tradition, or a careful spiritual taste, settled the question. It seems to be proved that Hebrews only gained its place because it was supposed to be written by St. Paul; and one fears that the definition of the canon only implied the ossifying of tradition. Nevertheless, the general contents of the New Testament are indisputably entitled to their place,—not because the early councils were wise, but because the facts, in the most cases, were beyond dispute. And, however we explain it, there certainly was, early in church history, a great and general falling away from the standard of New Testament enlightenment. Thus in the main there

is not merely a formal difference but a conspicuous material difference between apostolic teaching and the teaching of the subapostolic age. Hence the great value of the New Testament as a classical source of Christian truth, and that not merely, as Ritschl affirms, for dogmatic, but also for devotional purposes. Of course we do not exclude other helps to devotion; but we put all others on a lower platform. The habitual use of the New Testament is the best possible guarantee—next to conduct itself—of a healthful Christian life; the best possible refuge from defective teaching on the part of authorised church teachers. We kindle the flame of our own zeal from the zeal of primitive days as it glows on the pages of Scripture. And, in virtue of the fact that we share the writers' faith, and that we have the same moral nature out of which Christian faith grows, the record of their experiences is an open book to us.

Thirdly, we have the Old Testament, which, from the Christian's point of view, is the literary monument of the historical preparation for Christ. Too often the Old Testament is put out of its place in descriptions of the Bible, perhaps because it bulks so largely. The Bible is not primarily a national literature; it is the classical literature of the Church of Christ, and of the kingdom of God. We accept the Old Testament mainly because we accept Christ, and because Christ sprang from Israel, and gave its faith His sanction. This sanction, again, like the spiritual sanction of the New Testament, we understand in a general sense, but decline to press it in details. But, when we accept the Old Testament, we find in it a new and powerful witness to Christ, and a most precious addition to our devotional literature.

From the Christian point of view, the Old Testament is the literature of the preparation for Christ. Christ is its unity—its explanation—its vindication. From the point of view of comparative religion, the Old Testament is the literature of the one race in which morality and religion were steadily developed together. Greek philosophical ethics have no religious basis.

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In some respects they are able for that reason to bring out fresh aspects of truth; so complex a thing is human progress. Yet the Jew hath 'much advantage every way' in possessing the oracles of God. From the point of view of the Old Testament itself, it is the revelation of Jehovah, the Holy One, the God of Israel. Its unity is found (from its own point of view) in the inseparable connection between Jehovah and Israel which is given *a priori*—and in the character of Jehovah, as righteous and holy, which fills the whole book. In other words, we have to trace in the Old Testament the progress of a tribal religion, by means of a growing sense of the moral character of God, and of all that that character implied, till it was fitted to become the world's religion.

Much of the Old Testament consists of historical and legal matter—or of matter believed to be historical. This is little more than a framework into which we have to fit the more permanent elements of the Old Testament. In the prophets and in the Psalms we have the simplest, most vivid and piercing, revelations of God as a righteous will, and of the life of duty as a communion with God. Sometimes, when the New Testament epistles sound technical, and seem impervious to our sympathy, we turn back to the Old Testament for the naked elements of religious life; and we find it singularly powerful. All such thoughts of God have a vivid internal evidence. Yet they did not work in Israel merely by their internal credibility. They worked as messages to the people from Jehovah, their fathers' God—a God whom it was useless to ignore, from whom they never could disentangle themselves. And for us likewise these flashes of light upon God and upon duty do not stand alone. They are verified by the absolute revelation in Christ.

Of course, the Old Testament being a process of growth, all its contents are not equally pure or equally valuable. It is also matter of course that, in criticising any process, we must criticise it in the light of its final result. We do not deny the moral crudity of much that is in the Old Testament. But, if

you read the book with any sort of historic sense, knowing that in it God's work is only half done, neither your judgment nor your devotion will be much disturbed by these imperfections. When we set aside, *e.g.*, the imprecations of the Psalms, it is not that we, unholy men, are criticising God's work, but that the same thing at a further stage of its growth—the mind of Christ, more fully unfolded to men—is criticising the less pure and adequate manifestations of itself under an earlier dispensation. But why should the unchanging God make use of a process at all? Ah, the God of revelation is a very different being from the God of the Calvinist! To Calvinism, nothing is means to an end in the moral universe except only the sacrifice of Christ. That accomplished, everything else proceeds by God's irresistible will. And if, anywhere, a good result is not achieved, the only reason is that God did not will it should be achieved. Whereas the real God of revelation and experience is everywhere manifested as working under moral conditions. Man's ignorance is not a good thing; but it is the precondition of a good thing,—the moral life in man. Sin is not a good thing; it is the worst of things; but the permission of sin is the precondition of the best of things,—God's work of redemption. The crudities of the Old Testament are not good; but they are elements in one of God's best gifts—a revelation of Himself communicated to men in correspondence with their advance in the life of faith and obedience.

Along with the developing morality and piety of the Old Testament we have, in the Old Testament, a process of self-criticism, specially connected with the wisdom literature. Perhaps the leading results of this development are a new sense of the sacredness of the individual, and the postulate of personal immortality. These are great results; but they threaten the very basis of Old Testament piety, which sprang out of a tribal religion, and which drew its supernatural certainties from the living connection between Jehovah and the contemporary generation of Israelites. The new indivi-

dualism, combined with the legal precision which dated from the exile, produced Pharisaism. The Pharisee conception of the law is what St. Paul shares when he criticises and denounces a religion of law. The living morality of the old tribal faith was at an end. The instinctive sympathy of the individual with his people no longer operated. Thus it was that 'morality' had to be 'new given' by Jesus Christ. Christianity had to subordinate the individual without suppressing him, and had to combine the hope of personal immortality with a life of self-denial. We know how Jesus Christ's own personality did this,—the living image of the Father, full of grace and truth; so that the outcome of Christ's work is a kingdom of God on the earth, whose destinies reach to heaven. Thus Christ is our point of view for reading the Old Testament's self-criticism, as well as for reading its elementary exercises in faith, and repentance, and love. In Christ we are raised above the differences and half-truths of the earlier time. What came in it 'in sundry portions and in divers manners' comes to us in a unity, in the Son of God.

Finally, the Old Testament contains prediction. Again and again, from different points of view, its seers look forward to a better time. Their manifold prophecies, not always consistent with each other, we generally include under the name, Messianic—a name taken from one of the most historically important classes of prediction, though not one of the deepest, spiritually. By these anticipations, God prepared the way of His Son. They record the Old Testament's own verdict, that perfection was not to be attained under the Old Testament system. Fulfilment might not—and did not—exactly agree with any of the anticipations contained in prediction. But the value of prediction lay in this, that the confessed imperfection of the Old Testament system, and its forward glance, completed its work as a preparation for Christ.

IX.

Now, when we say that the Bible appeals to us by its

internal evidence, or that we hear the witness of the Holy Spirit speaking to us through the word, we mean one of two things. Either we mean that the facts of the gospel are what we should expect from God,—what our moral instincts tell us must be true, when they are reported to us. Or else we mean that the way in which, either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, God is represented as dealing with men, or men are represented as responding to God, are the ways which, in the light of the character and working of God revealed in Christ, the Spirit of God presses with demonstration on our own consciences, as the ways of God in grace, or as ways in which we ought to respond to the grace of God.

Hence we can have no sympathy with the celebrated sneer of J. D. Michaelis, that he had never himself, while reading the Bible, been conscious of the alleged supernatural testimony of the Holy Spirit. If he merely meant that he was not conscious of any extra-moral attestation of Scripture,—of any compulsion to believe, apart from the inner credibility of revelation, and apart from his own moral experience,—then we should agree with him, though we must think his criticism badly expressed. But if he meant—in the spirit of his century—that only because of its accompanying miracles he knew the Bible to be (probably) true,—then we must charge him with being dead to the real evidence for Scripture. Not that we dream of confining to Scripture alone the witness borne by the Holy Spirit. All goodness comes from God; and all moral piety, or even bare morality, which has the ring of sincerity in it, speaks to us, as a message from a spiritual world, unseen and eternal, with quite a different sort of cogency from that of logical demonstration. When I read in the words of Dr. Thomas Arnold, ‘Differences of opinion give me but little concern; but it is a real pleasure to be brought into communication with any man who is in earnest, and who really looks to God’s will as his standard of right and wrong, and judges of actions according to their greater or less conformity’—when I read this, I know that a greater voice is speaking to

me through these words. Or when I read in Tolstoi, 'Everything that once seemed to me important, such as honour, glory, civilisation, wealth, the complications and refinements of existence, luxury, rich food, fine clothing, etiquette, have become for me wrong and despicable; everything that once seemed to me wrong and despicable, such as rusticity, obscurity, poverty, simplicity of surroundings, of food, of clothing, of manners, all have now become right and important to me,'—the light is there, even if it be shining amid much darkness. Or we hear the same voice in T. H. Green:—'His witness grows with time, in great books and great examples, in the gathering fulness of spiritual utterance which we trace through the history of literature, in the self-denying love which we have known from the cradle, in the moralising influence of civil life, in the close fellowship of the Christian society, in the sacramental ordinances which represent that fellowship, in common worship, in the message of the preacher, through which, amid diversity of stammering tongues, one spirit still speaks—here God's sunshine is shed abroad without us. *If it does not reach the heart, it is because the heart has a darkness of its own, some unconquered selfishness, which prevents its relation to Him being one of sincerity and truth.*' Or, elsewhere: 'Faith in God and duty will survive much doubt, and difficulty, and distress, and perhaps attain to some nobler mode of itself under their influence. But if once we have come to acquiesce in such a standard of living as must make us wish God and duty to be illusions, it must surely die.' Again, we hear God's voice in the *de Imitatione*,—"He that followeth me, walketh not in darkness," saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are taught to imitate His life and manners, if we would be truly enlightened, and be delivered from blindness of heart. Let therefore our chief endeavour be to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ.' We hear it even in the language of George Eliot: 'We can only have the highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts, and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves;

and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else because our souls see it is good.' For the presence of God's Spirit does not imply the absence of all error or of all wrong-doing. It implies the possession of some truth and some life. Wherever there is a sincere utterance of conscience (which is the rudiment of all good), or of faith in Christ (which is the consummation of all spiritual knowledge), there God is present. People are afraid to praise sincerity lest they should make the way of life too easy. Is anything rarer than true sincerity of heart? Who is so free from all duplicity of motive that he can claim perfect sincerity? 'A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit'; a character alloyed with base elements cannot ring true. It is not, I think, the limitations of a prophetic message that render it powerless, but the affectation of an insight which the preacher does not possess. 'If any man prophesy, let him prophesy according to the proportion of his faith.' Otherwise he will seem to run uncertainly, and to fight as if he beat the air. One has known the very presence of God in sermons,—in prayers,—in poems,—in everything which (unlike the material world, where we have only images of moral things) bears witness to man's duty, or to God's grace. Yet the Bible has pre-eminence, due, as has already been said, essentially to this, that it enshrines Christ.

Spiritual evidence of this kind, either to the Bible or to other moral teaching, attests the general truth of what is taught—not its details. The Bible furnishes a safeguard against substantial error. For the heart of the Bible is the work of Christ; its primary function is to bring us into contact with Him; and, if we know that God is in Christ, then the gift of eternal life, and the leading certainties of spiritual experience, are at once assured to us. Yet it remains possible that we may have imperfect records of historical fact; it remains possible that we may have before us transcripts of imperfect spiritual experiences.

On what grounds do orthodox people believe the Scriptures? Is it only because Scripture is authoritatively revealed to be true? Not so; when the orthodox are afraid of seeing the certainties of their faith lost in the mist, they will tell you that they are being robbed of their eternal salvation. Very good. But then it must be the general system of the gospel to which they cling—not the mass of so-called authoritative details. They do not believe an ‘inspired’ genealogy in Chronicles with the same kind of faith with which they believe an ‘inspired’ gospel. They may accept the first, because they think it inseparably connected with their salvation; they accept the second, because it is itself their salvation.

Observe that we pronounce no approval of the *form* in which the witness of the Holy Spirit utters itself in a Calvinistic mind. By urging that they must not lose the certainty of salvation, orthodox people show that they have a moral and religious motive for believing the Bible. But, when they speak of losing their hope of salvation, as if that loss would be mere personal disadvantage, they fail to press the real strength of the Christian position; they betray the taint of Calvinism. Christian faith is primarily faith in the character of God as love, and as therefore naturally, though in marvellous grace, interposing to save His children. Calvinism knows nothing of God’s character, except that He is an inflexible lawgiver. The revealed character of God is represented as condemning the sinner; our hopes are built not on the Divine character, but on the arbitrary or inscrutable will of God. Man’s salvation and God’s glory are connected only by accident. Hence, when the Christian says, ‘You slander my Father in heaven,’ the Calvinist can only say, ‘You rob me of my hope.’ When the Christian says, ‘I believe in redemption because it is like God,’ the Calvinist says, ‘I believe in it because it is authoritatively revealed,’ or else, ‘I believe in it because I need it so much.’ Yes; one’s needs prove much, if we have a loving Father in heaven; in that case every need is a prophecy of grace; but, if all that we know of God is that He acts ‘for His

own glory,' then our need may generate a wish, but contributes nothing towards a proof. The sense of need makes even the Calvinist attempt to state the internal evidence—to give voice to the witness of the Holy Spirit; but the Calvinistic doctrine of an unknown God stifles the attempt. Yet be it noticed that this attempt refers to the general scheme of the gospel—not to its details. It is the message of salvation that the human soul needs—not the infallible lost original manuscripts of the Bible.

The theory of inerrant inspiration is generally held, because it is the only way in which men can conceive of God's communicating with us. But we have just seen that the basis of Christian faith is laid in the general witness of the gospel, not in its details; and all experience proves it to be lamentable folly, to hold that God must act in a certain way because we cannot else conceive how He should reach His end.

A second theory of inspiration bases on Scripture itself, in the sense of asking what Scripture claims. M'Leod Campbell leans to this view; and it would lead to far more reasonable results than the claims of theology lead to. But Scripture does not really construct a theory of its origin. What it does is to canonise earlier Scriptures. And, in its handling of them, we see the scientific defects of its age. I shall give an instance in proof directly.

A third theory of inspiration is based on the facts of the Bible, as they present themselves to the disinterested scientific student. By such study many valuable critical and exegetical results can be reached; and a very little impartiality shows us historical discrepancies, scientific errors, moral development. It is not an unbelieving writer, but a believing writer—Mr. J. M. Wilson—who reports on the Old Testament in the staid atmosphere of the Church Congress—'Portions of the narrative, quite irrespectively of all questions about the miraculous element, have come to be regarded as legendary and unhistorical; and the text is found to be by no means perfect. It is a positive result of literary criticism and of modern science

to make it clear that no science is taught or implied, and that the scientific standpoint of the writers was simply that of the period in which they wrote. It is a still more important result that the morality inculcated, indeed revelation itself, must be regarded as progressive and historical; stages of gradual enlightenment succeeding one another.¹ But, while mere science can teach us negative lessons, I do not think it can give a complete account of what the Bible is. When you come upon miracles, which Christians believe to be historical—when you come upon the assertion of God's personal presence, and working, and revelation,—you are at the parting of the ways. You can no longer be a mere man of science. You must become either a Christian or a sceptic.

And therefore I should say, that inspiration is the relation of God to the phenomena of the Bible, as it shows itself to those who believe that God was in Christ. In other words, the Bible contains, first, a sufficient record of the historical Christ, along with pattern examples of the spirit of faith and obedience; secondly, the literary remains of the threefold preparation for Christ under the Old Testament. And the Bible is inspired *because* it contains the facts of revelation, recorded by believers in the God of Israel or in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; because it also contains typical experiences of faith and exhortations to obedience under both covenants. The Bible writers were inspired as all Christians are, and they occupied a position in the kingdom of God which made their work of unique value. Whether their illumination, over and above this, differed qualitatively from our own, who can say? It is not by tracing out the inscrutable processes of Divine causation that we can ever verify the working of God.

But we can see pretty plainly that inspiration did not preclude error. Let us look at St. Paul's use of the Old Testament. Does any one seriously believe that Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia? Or that 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox,' etc.,

¹ *The Religious Thought of our Times*, pp. 266, 267.

means, Thou shalt not withhold his stipend from the Christian minister? or that it would be ridiculous to think that God takes care of oxen? But let us take a case that is less familiar, and perhaps less generally understood.

The prophet Isaiah represents his scornful enemies among the people as complaining, 'he treats us like children, interfering perpetually with his petty recommendations and advice. . . . But Isaiah rises to the occasion; he retorts his opponents' sarcasm, charged with a new and terrible significance, upon themselves. . . . Nay, you are mistaken. This childish monotone (for such, in the Hebrew, are the words in which they censure the prophet) shall indeed sound in your ears; you shall listen to the harsh and uncouth tones of a foreign invader. The word which you have rejected as a series of vexatious commands, shall become to you a series of vexatious demands, culminating in a disaster for which your calculations have omitted to allow.'¹ 'Nay, but by men of strange lips and with another tongue will he speak to this people; to whom he said, This is the rest, give ye rest to him that is weary; and this is the refreshing; yet they would not hear' (Isa. xxviii. 11, 12).

St. Paul refers to this in writing to Corinth. He regrets that the 'greater gifts' (1 Cor. xii. 31)—such as prophecy, miracle, healing (ver. 28-31), or, better than all, love (xiii.)—are very much pushed aside at Corinth by the prevalence of 'speaking in an unknown tongue'—a form of half-conscious ecstatic utterance (xiv. 2-4). He admits that the latter is a Divine gift; he can himself surpass all others in its strange ecstasy (xiv. 18); but he had rather not cultivate it—better a less allowance of a gift which profits others (19).

Then he quotes from Isaiah—not quite accurately: 'In the law it is written, By men of strange tongues, and by the lips of strangers, will I speak unto this people; and *not even thus will they hear me, saith the Lord*' (21). That is to say—he does not quite put it so, but his meaning is—Tongues are a

¹ Driver, *Isaiah, his Life and Times*.

sign sent in judgment, not in mercy ; they confirm sinners in their want of faith. God's message by strange tongues is not addressed to believers, but to unbelievers (22), and it only serves to strengthen their unbelief (23). Prophecy, the believer's sign, is also the converting sign (24, 25).

Now, this is extremely ingenious. But who will contend—or who would contend, if the passage occurred elsewhere than in the Bible—that it is anything except ingenious trifling? Who will assert that there is anything in common between the foreign speech of the barbarian invader seven centuries before Christ and the inarticulate ecstasy of Corinthian Christians in the apostolic Church? Even if Isaiah had said, 'Not even thus will they hear me, saith the Lord'—which Isaiah did not say—what possible application would the words have had to the case with which the apostle was dealing? We used sometimes to be told that, when the New Testament makes a strained use of Old Testament quotations, we had really before us an authoritative comment by God, the almighty author of Scripture, upon His meaning in the earlier passage. But here St. Paul's application simply will not work. The assertion is not that strange tongues are a sign of God's anger, or a preliminary of judgment upon unbelievers ; the assertion is that armed invaders (whose language is accidentally referred to for rhetorical purposes) will soon punish the land. It is not because of his intellectual methods, but in spite of them, that St. Paul is great. He is capable of strange extravagance in his use of the Old Testament.

There is, therefore, error in Scripture. And, where infallibility is in question, one proof of error is as good as a thousand. Nor is it possible to confine error to the non-spiritual contents of the Bible. We see that, even in its handling of earlier Scriptures, the Bible is far from infallible. Error is possible—error in points of fact, imperfection of insight, admixture of sinful feelings. What are we left to be sure of? We are left to be sure of Christ, the image of God. We are sure of sufficient knowledge of Him, and of sufficient light and strength for Christian service.

If then our faith only verifies the general scope of Scripture, and if inquiry shows that there are faults and errors of detail in Scripture, we feel ourselves emboldened to affirm, that Scripture with flaws in it must be better adapted for the ends of Christian faith than flawless infallibility itself would be.

There are not two kinds of Christian faith, one of which believes in Christ to the soul's salvation, while the other believes the accuracy of Scripture wholesale and undigested. It is with God that we have to do, and with Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God, and the only way of access to the Father. Our certainty stands in our recognising Christ's voice and following Him. ~~People ask for an objective standard of spiritual truth, apart from the moral state of their hearts. They ask for it, but God will never give it.~~ They pretend to possess it in the Church ; and God allows the Church to grow foul with corruption that their idol may be broken. They pretend to possess it in the Bible ; and God sets all the microscopes of critical research to scrutinise the Bible, that every flaw may be made the most of. What is the orthodox claim but idolatry ? ' We cannot do with the invisible God. Give us something nearer at hand to revere.' And, like every superstition, it claims to be far more devout than spiritual faith. Did they not call the early Christians atheists ?

Moreover, the groundless assertion of infallibility produces an extremely irritating effect upon all the critics of orthodoxy. Hostile minds will never do the Bible that amount of justice of which they are capable so long as they are taunted with its 'entire perfection.' When we cease to babble of infallibility, misconception upon both sides will largely clear away. It is irritating to see arguments pass muster in support of the Bible which would have no chance of living for a moment, even in the minds of orthodox men, elsewhere than in their theology. It is demoralising for the Christian Church to be committed to an impossible position. How can the Church denounce the tricks of commerce when she has to play tricks with evidence in support of what she is foolish enough, and irreverent enough, to take for God's truth ?

But most important of all; a belief resting upon external authority is a totally different thing from a belief resting upon moral perception. If the Bible happened to be infallible, that would be no reason for enthroning it, otherwise than so far as God's voice speaks to us through it. But the treasure is in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God—that when the groundless claims of the Church and of the Bible are cleared away, we may more plainly see Christ, and apprehend His absolute authority over us. His is no strange authority. It is known perfection, manifest God-head, that in Him speaks to the conscience of each man. The moral world, for us men, is the kingdom of Christ; 'the head of every man is Christ.' Thus, whoever follows the authority of conscience is on the way to Christ. It is a real possibility—it is a real certainty—that he shall find the light of life, and shall grow into the possession of Christian faith and hope, if he will but give the gospel of God a chance. And his certainty will be the certainty of moral perception and moral experience.

No authoritative opinions bring a man nearer Christ. They may separate him from Christ, if they are allowed to usurp an authority which belongs to the only Lord of the conscience.

Christianity is really a plain thing, meant to tell upon our conduct. By faith we believe in God—His perfect righteousness, love, and Fatherly providence—and in Christ's revelation and His redemption from sin: that He has left us commandment and example how we ought to live, and promised us His Spirit to enable us to follow Him. We believe that justice and judgment are the foundation of God's throne—that mercy and truth go before His face; that the moral issues of this life stretch on into the eternal. Such are the simple elements of the message with which God intrusts us. All besides is secondary. And, if we make the Word of God of none effect by our tradition, we know what the Master will say to us when He sets His seat for judgment.

IV.

THE CALVINISTIC CONCEPTION OF GRACE.

I.

THE Christian life rests upon the consciousness of redemption from sin into a state of blessedness and holiness through Jesus Christ. All the theologies of all the Churches are attempts to explain the principles, or to lay bare the machinery, by which God's causation in grace operates for the communication of the Christian salvation. We are concerned here with a criticism of one of these theologies. But let us not deceive ourselves. In criticising the principles upon which Calvinism rests, we are setting ourselves in antagonism to the orthodox doctrinal tradition of the Christian world. Only, the majority of Churches leave the doctrinal highway, and get into a bye-path by their superstitious doctrine of the sacraments. Theology, we have said, seeks to explain the Christian revelation. If, then, you plant something radically unintelligible in men's way, explanations come to an end. Now this is very convenient for the high churchman. You cannot see awkward sights if it is pitch dark; and the sacramentarian, with his doctrine of grace all in a tangle, looks down with much contempt on the merciless clearness and thoroughgoingness of the Calvinist. On the other hand, all the upcrops of evangelical Arminianism are so many inconsequences. These systems have laid down Calvinistic principles; but, in horror—very just and righteous horror—at Calvinistic conclusions, they have stopped half-way, and made a common-sense but illogical version of the intolerable system. Yet it is obvious that such compromises bring no salvation with them. All the great Christian bodies have set

out on the same track, though none but the Calvinists have persevered to the end, or have dared to look 'Medusa's head'¹ fair in the eyes. Therefore we make up our minds to break with Catholic doctrinal tradition, in order that we may make a clean and final escape from the Gorgon.

Theology being an account of God's causation in grace, it is not unnatural that all schools of doctrine should treat grace as if it were exactly analogous to any second cause or finite cause. We cannot but conceive of the less familiar in terms of the more familiar. Our imaginative and emotional language is fully entitled, for its own purposes, to describe Divine agency as if it were a particular and individual cause in that *mêlée* of causes, physical and moral, amid which we live and strive, sin and conquer. But, when science lays hold of such imaginative or emotional descriptions, and reads them as literal revelations of supernatural realities, then it is time to protest. Then it is time to point out that God is not one of the all, but that He is above all, and through all, and in the all. Yet, to the untrained mind of the average man, our protest may seem to be an atheistic denial of God. Still more repugnant will it be to the perverted mind of the scholastic dogmatist. It is no wonder then, if all the Churches have set off upon that misleading road which seems to afford them views of God's grace as a definite finite cause.

But this is not all. Christian theology is not a speculative Theism; it is a doctrine of redemption. In other words, it does not furnish a theory of the Divine causation as such, but of Divine grace, or of those processes by which God works out the redemption of guilty man. There are two reasons therefore why the theology of the Churches regards grace as an omnipotent special Divine operation—first, there is the religious sense of man's absolute dependence upon God; and, secondly, there is the moral sense of man's utter guilt on account of sin. It may be that, under certain circumstances, the first of these reasons would of itself generate a sort of Calvinism. It very

¹ Julius Miller in *The Christian Doctrine of Sin*, Eng. tr., vol. ii. p. 239.

likely is the case, that orthodox theology has drawn great part of its strength from a reverent sense of dependence upon God, —from a reverent attribution of all that takes place in the moral world to God as its author. But such a doctrine is not a true doctrine of grace. And such support to Calvinistic theology is illegitimately obtained. Calvinism does not begin till both the above reasons for belief in a 'Divine monergism' are taken together. Its theory is that man is absolutely dependent on God, *because* man is utterly dead in sin. The obvious implication is, that, if man were not utterly dead in sin, man would not be absolutely dependent on God. And this implication is boldly worked out in the doctrine of the covenant of works made with Adam.

I shall ask the reader to believe that this concatenation of ideas is wholly perverse. It is true that man is absolutely dependent on God; it is true that sin is absolutely and immeasurably evil. But it is not true that the evil of sin is the only reason why man lies helpless at God's feet. It is not true that, under any circumstances, it is either desirable or possible for man to be justified or to attain blessedness by his own works, apart from the indwelling of God. Out of this fundamental error may be deduced all that is bad in Calvinism, and all that is implicitly and potentially bad, with the badness of the Calvinistic taint, in sacramentarian or Arminian theologies.

II.

We thus begin our controversy quite in the correct fashion with a discussion of the state of man unfallen. By this, however, we do not, for our part, understand a discussion of the original state of two human beings, from whom the whole human race is descended. There may have been such a primitive pair, or there may not. If there was, they may have lived for a time in exceptional innocence, or they may not. Theology will do wisely not to embarrass itself with dogmatic assertions upon these points. Such assertions are unverifiable,

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and they are really unnecessary. What are we discussing then? We are discussing the religious relation of man to God in its abstraction, apart from the influence of sin, and therefore apart from an influence which, however it may have arisen—and its origin is confessedly mysterious—is imputable to man's own guilt, and tends to mar or to destroy his spiritual relationship with God. Now we have real knowledge of man's religious relation to God. We do not know it, indeed, in our own experience, except as troubled by sin. We know it, not under the order of innocence, but under the redemptive order. But, being reconciled to God—yielding ourselves, in faith, to the influences of His Spirit—setting ourselves to do His will—we know God and the Divine life, however imperfectly. We need not go into the heights or depths to seek for the things of God. They are near us. We have a real experience of the essential constituents of fellowship with God. And this experience teaches us that we are not complete in ourselves, but in God; that essentially, as His reasonable creatures, we find our complement and our chief end in Him; that, as His servants, we gain our freedom in doing His will; that man's personality is not sealed against God, or God's Spirit strange to man, but that 'He dwelleth in us and we in Him.' Man's operation and God's operation do not exclude each other. Man's freedom and God's agency presuppose each other. 'In Him we live, and move, and have our being.'

All this will be admitted and asserted by Calvinism; but in whose case? In that of the elect, who are embraced under the decree of redemption, and who live under a dispensation of grace which is not merely supernatural but unnatural. In the case of our first parent Adam—*i.e.* in the case of the normal human being—Calvinism explicitly denies that there was any such relationship with God. Adam was free, inasmuch as he was '*left*' to the freedom of his own will; he was placed under probation, and enjoyed a conditional promise, by the 'covenant of life.' Very good. Normal man is indeed under probation; he has indeed a promise of ampler reward to

cheer him in the moral struggle. But, that Adam might have been, and ought to have been, justified by his own efforts, so that the reward should have been 'reckoned not of grace, but of debt,'—no; ten thousand times no. This figment of man's natural destiny is not only un-Pauline but anti-Pauline; it would have shocked the apostle of grace to an inexpressible degree. The idea of religion 'since the Fall,' against which F. D. Maurice protests, reveals the moral narrowness and coldness of dogmatic tradition. The first axiom of religious experience is, that there is no contrast between 'our own efforts' and 'God's grace.' It is God who orders our circumstances; it is God who reveals our duty; it is God who enables us to perform it. He is the synthesis of Providence without us and moral effort within. Because we are God's children, we are free; nature has no power over us. He is not the rival but the guarantee of our freedom. When we understand this, our faith overcomes the world; all things are put under our feet; we are 'with God at the centre of the universe.'

The Roman Catholic doctrine of Adam—by whom we insist on understanding the normal human being—teaches that Adam as created needed, and enjoyed, a supernatural gift of faith to bring him into spiritual relationship with God. At first hearing this sounds more pious than the Calvinistic doctrine, that Adam could and should have worked out eternal life for himself. But, when we look more closely, we see that both doctrines have the same fault. Both represent human nature and Divine grace as mutually exclusive finite agencies. To both, man stops where God begins, and God stops where man begins. The Romish Church teaches that man as created was a mutilated being, and thus indicates the dependence of man upon God. Calvinism affects to believe that man was created self-sufficient, and thus saves the integrity of human nature by denying its need of God's grace. We assert that man's personality is pervious to God's Spirit; that man comes to himself in yielding himself to God. And this is not mere dogmatic assertion. The subjective mark of man's dependence on God

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is the *rôle* which faith plays in man's spiritual history. We see that man cannot attain his full stature apart from God since he does not attain it apart from faith in God.

The Calvinistic doctrine of unfallen man reveals the taint of legalism which runs through the whole system. It conceives of God as essentially and always a lawgiver—as rarely and by exceptional decree a Father or a friend. Man's normal relation to God is that of a hired labourer, working for payment. God invites man to serve Him, shows him what work to do, promises him his wages, pays them if they are earned,—but that is all. God keeps aloof; God and man are by nature remote from each other. Man is a servant rather than a child; God is justice rather than love. Now legalism is a half-truth. It is neither wholly true nor wholly false; it is right in what it affirms, and wrong in what it denies. The confident 'either—or of the ordinary consciousness' is totally out of place in dealing with such questions. Man is and must be a servant; God 'renders to every man according to his work.' But man can only be a good servant if he is more than a servant; and the revelation of God as a sovereign will, though it may perhaps be the first aspect in which God reveals Himself, is really the least and slightest of all God's self-revelations. The personal relation of man's spirit to God is what is highest and most vital for faith.

We conclude, then, as against Calvinism, that

(1) Man's absolute dependence on God does not originate in man's sin.

(2) God's operations in the human spirit are probably inscrutable.

(3) At any rate, we cannot prove Divine causation by showing that no human factors are at work: there are other reasons which demand and warrant faith in God.

It is important to notice that Calvinism has postulated human freedom (*viz.*, in the first man) by its doctrine of the covenant of works. Sometimes theological advocates of *servum arbitrium* tell us that Calvinism is *indifferent* towards the

philosophical question between liberty and necessity. They are putting the case—inadvertently no doubt—too favourably for themselves. Calvinism has taken a side. It is a pledged libertarian. Adam's probation is traced to his liberty; and the more than omniscient Westminster Divines have affirmed 'the liberty or contingency of second causes,'—whatever the good men may have meant by that. They did not deny free-will; they knew that it was an essential component of human nature; they knew what they were saying when they affirmed that that essential component of human nature had been paralysed since the dawn of history. If then there are any disadvantages or difficulties for the Theist in the doctrine of human freedom, these difficulties strike the system of Calvinism no less severely than they strike our own. Perhaps they strike it harder; for the legalism of the system precludes that emotional and experimental synthesis of Divine and human causation to which we have already referred. Again, any argument in defence of the doctrine of 'slave-will' on the ground of the mysteriousness of God's operations, or on the lines of an assertion that man's spiritual processes may be both human and divine, is really irrelevant. Calvinism needs all the help it can get from the conception of God's mysteriousness, to carry through its doctrine of man's original state in harmony with its doctrine of predestination. And the Calvinistic doctrine of the fallen will is not simply a way of expressing the greatness and power of God:—it is a special anthropological assertion, lying well upon this side of the region of mystery. Its (misinterpreted) moral motives are easily discoverable; its monstrous consequences are unavoidable.

In our own case, as sinful men, it is doubtless true that we have no experience of the creature's dependence on God apart from the sinner's dependence on his Saviour. The two occur mingled, or blended, in our own spiritual lives; and an antagonist may suggest that we are perverse in trying to disentangle them. But such a criticism would be captious. If we are to theorise at all, we must define and distinguish; and the 'good

and necessary consequences,' which Calvinism has tacked on to its doctrine of human dependence, prove that the question is very far from being a mere speculative curiosity. More serious perhaps is another objection. It may be asked, Has sin made no difference? Even if unfallen man's dependence on God is one of freedom, yet—it may be asked—is not fallen man's dependence on God necessarily one of bondage? I do not think that sin can have made that difference. In the doctrine of man's original estate we have been determining what is the essential form of the 'religious relation'; we have been ascertaining the laws of spiritual life. If religion is essentially freedom, the religion of redemption cannot well be galvanism. Moreover, the way in which the apostle Paul uses sin to break down the self-righteous claims of human legalism, and then, without a moment's delay, brings in God's grace as the true source of righteousness, seems to teach that the religion which saves sinners is a normal working of the love of God. Certainly, the apostle has never taken the distinction of which we are ourselves making use. In some ways, it might have been better had he done so. On the other hand, the apostle has nowhere embarrassed himself with the covenant of works made with Adam. And, when he puts law and grace, law and the spirit, as exhaustive of the possibilities of religion, he seems to have no conception of the religious state of man under the gospel as being semi-legal. But indeed Calvinism itself recognises that the religious life of Christians attains to the highest possible prerogatives. Only, this life is held to be confined to those who, in pursuance of a sovereign decree, are lifted out of their fellowship with fallen humanity and transferred by miracle into fellowship with God. It is upon the remainder of humanity that the characteristic penalty of sin is supposed to rest. Let us inquire therefore how our views of man's fallen condition will compare with those of Calvinism.

III.

We shall be inclined to represent man's sin as being rather

an act or a habit of turning away from God than a state of total moral separation from God. Unquestionably, so far as sin exists, it tends towards the absolute eradication of every thing good from the human soul and towards its complete estrangement from God. But we must not impute the final outcome of sin where we are tracing its inner tendency. And, if freedom was implied in Adam's responsibility—*i.e.* in the responsibility of the normal human being,—it will also be implied in our own responsibility. As persons, we can only be condemned by our own guilt. In point of fact, men, depraved as they are, have not become as wicked as possible. The freedom of the human will is to be regarded as the real psychological pledge of that 'capacity for being saved' which even Calvinism felt bound to postulate. Of course this does not mean that man is capable of being saved apart from God. It does not even mean that man is a free being apart from God. God is revealed, though only partially, in His creation; His moral works, no less than His works of nature, bear witness to the Divine character; and in sinful man, fallen and wretched, but not beyond hope, we have a dim revelation of the character of God, who is just and pure, yet gracious to the unworthy. Salvation is not the supersession of free-will, but only of self-will; it is the regaining of freedom through reconciliation with God,—the regaining by a process—the regaining in a moral way—of freedom to do right. And the loss of a soul is the final loss of freedom—the final estrangement of the soul from God—through deliberate choice of sin.

Conscience, as the abstract knowledge of what is right, implies a corresponding capacity to follow after what is right. In the abstract, if the sinful man is to be a responsible and moral being, it must be possible that he should attain salvation under the light of nature. Whether this abstract possibility ever becomes a concrete reality is a different question. Our argument does not lead us to describe this possibility of salvation as other than an extremely arduous prospect, an extremely faint hope. But it is an interesting confirmation of

the Calvinistic deduction from the doctrine of election that there is salvation in this life for some 'incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.' It puts a measure of experimental meaning into that dogmatic assertion. How far God is pleased to make use of it, or whether He makes use of it at all, we do not know. God has much more light to reveal to the soul of man beyond the light of nature.

This subject is represented in a different light by Calvinism. It argues that man is helpless, because fallen—fallen because helpless. Hence it has to paint humanity in its actual state as black as possible, lest it should seem to disparage the grace of God. The strange libels on human nature published in the Westminster Confession are not mere infelicities of expression; they rest upon a religious interest, but upon a religious interest gone mad. In all these calumnies on his species, the dogmatist is trying to express his sense of the greatness and absoluteness of God's grace. Between his sense of grace and of human sin, he sees no way out of his theology. Criticise him, he will refer you from one consideration to the other, and from the second back to the first. Both are good motives; but not either of them, nor yet both combined, can excuse the falsehoods of Calvinistic anthropology, or can warrant describing man as if he had ceased to be a moral agent. Such a phrase as 'spiritual good accompanying salvation' merely equivocates. It postulates a kind of supernatural goodness which is different from ordinary moral goodness, of which only regenerate persons are capable. There can be no such thing. Outside of morality nothing exists; certainly nothing exists for man of the nature of religion. The Battle of Mansoul consists in the loss, and in the recovery of moral goodness. To assert that persons without religion have no virtues is a falsehood. To assert that all truly pious persons already possess every virtue, though imperfectly developed, is also a falsehood. Why are we still pestered with such meaningless conventional fables? Is not God a God of truth? Does He not search the heart?

IV.

On the premises laid down by Calvinism regarding man's sin and the nature of grace, it is only possible to conceive of the Saviour as being a substitute for sinful man. Whether, on these premises, any such idea as salvation is admissible, is a different question. Christ has come, however, with His 'glad tidings of great joy'; and every system of Christian theology must make room for them in some way. But is a substitutionary religion possible? Such piety as is sketched, *e.g.*, in Ps. l. certainly could not be discharged by deputy. The whole evolution of religious truth in the Bible looks away from Calvinism. Yet a substitutionary *justification* may perhaps prove possible. Calvinism falls back upon its legal doctrine of God, and represents Christ, the sinner's substitute, as offering a vicarious satisfaction to the law. The work of Christ, as thus conceived, has in all three aspects. First, by His sufferings Christ bore the penalty due to the broken law; secondly, by His obedience He satisfied the law's direct claim, which sinners had failed to meet; and thirdly, by all His work—alike by His active obedience and by His sufferings—Christ has merited for us a place in heaven, and the present possession of the Holy Spirit. There seems to be some uncertainty as to the third head. Ritschl traces the development of doctrine after the Reformation to the issue which has been stated above; and he defends the developed doctrine against all criticisms which are made from the same general point of view—*i.e.* he regards it as the legitimate form of Protestant dogmatism. But Dr. Charles Hodge seems to have no *locus* for the merit of Christ. And in vol. ii. of his large work, p. 482, he affirms, 'The law no longer condemns the sinner who believes in Christ. Those, however, whom the infinitely holy and strict law of God does not condemn are *entitled* to the Divine fellowship and favour.' This is surely very rash Calvinism. What says the Westminster Confession of Faith? 'The distance between God and the creature is so great that, although reasonable

creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet could they never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.¹ Indeed, I do not think Dr. Hodge's book a good one for showing the lie or drift of the system of doctrine which he professes. He is, for the most part, extremely orthodox in his details; but his book is only a collection of *loci communes*, each thesis being supported by five, six, seven rambling arguments. Hence we may perhaps disregard Dr. Hodge's aberration, and, in spite of him, treat the merit or purchase of Christ as an essential part of the orthodox construction of the substitutionary Atonement.

Of its three essential parts, there can be no question that the endurance of punishment is the most important. This doctrine appeals directly to the sinner's conscience; it expresses simply and forcibly that amazing obligation under which every Christian knows himself to lie to his Saviour; it answers strikingly to the facts of Christ's death. Hence the doctrine of Atonement gives new and strong support to the conception of Christ as a substitute. But we may, without disparaging the other considerations adduced, suggest that, after all, the doctrine of penal substitution is chiefly valued on the second of the above grounds, or because it gives those who hold it a clear expression of their obligations to God's grace in Christ. So very definite a conception of Christ's work seems to help the mind in transacting with Him. And, when men object to other and less definite theories of the Atonement, it is not so much that they love their own theory, as that they fear to be led into intricate paths, or into regions of twilight, where that which is now clear and distinct may become obscure and impalpable.

But the apparent clearness of a conception is no guarantee of its truth; nor is it any excuse for retaining the conception if it produces bad consequences in other directions. All that

¹ vii. § 1.

is meant by the doctrine we must retain; yet the doctrine itself, perhaps, is only emotional language misinterpreted as a scientific statement. We have to ask, Does the idea of a substitute, in any or all of these applications, really cover what Christ is to a Christian? For, if Christ is and must be a substitute, strictly so called, then whatever other 'offices' He discharges will come into play subsequently to His vicarious sacrifice, and in consequence of it. The question then is, whether substitution is an adequate category; and we must hold it inadequate. Christians, who cling to that category, are no doubt drawing much more from Christ than what they describe as a 'legal' righteousness. Happily, theory does not limit life; and all true Christians are wider and deeper than their theories. Yet a mistaken theory impoverishes life. Individuals may escape, but the community as such will suffer.

(1) In the first place, we notice as an unfortunate feature of the doctrine that the idea of Christ's vicarious sufferings, which appeals strongly to the conscience and to the religious instincts, has to be supplemented with ideas of vicarious obedience and vicarious merit, which certainly make no such direct appeal to our hearts. Logically, the substitution theology is defective without them; but they remain ingenious pieces of logic, with no direct influence on the Christian life. That Christ suffered for me, and that I shall not suffer—this I may come to accept as an expression of my debt to His great grace. But what can one make of the rest? That Christ has been obedient for me, and that I am released from my former obligations to obey God's law? That Christ has earned heaven for me, and that I shall go to heaven because of His merits, whatever my own moral state may be? These are theological ingenuities, which stand very far off from the religious life. But, if these parts of the theory are dropped, it becomes confessedly incomplete.

(2) Not even the doctrine of Christ's penal suffering is adhered to under cross-examination. What seems a clear, definite, probable interpretation of Christ's redemptive work

crumbles away under one's hands. The doctrine really asserts that Christ suffered 'damnation, and damnation borne lovingly.'¹ But that is bold, perhaps audacious, rhetoric. Dr. M'Leod Campbell has shown² how little Edwards' detailed account, either of the obedience of our Lord, or of His sufferings, corresponds to the idea of legal requirement or legal penalty. What Calvinism wishes to express is, the Christian's absolute indebtedness to Christ, and his perfect blessedness in Christ. We also assert these truths. But we do not think that we should make those truths any more secure if we embodied them in sweeping rhetorical assertions which we afterwards explained away, word by word. In fact, if God is dealing with sinners by way of law, the existence of a gospel is inexplicable. Law requires perfect obedience; broken law demands penalties; but transference of penalty to the innocent is a thing unknown to any law. And the way in which Christ's Godhead is introduced to rebut objections and to establish the infinite value of His sacrifice is surely unfortunate. God, subject to law, acquiring infinite merit, and absolving infinite penalties—that is neither morality nor religion, but a scholastic fancy. On the other hand, if law is only an imperfect manifestation of the Divine character,—if legalism only explains one aspect, and that a superficial aspect, of God's ways,—then 'mercy may glory against judgment,' doing more perfectly what law has failed to do. There may be 'a righteousness of God without the law,' which is not against the law, but above it.

(3) Thirdly: we have spoken so far of Christ as a substitute. Even His merits we have considered as procuring in our stead, and on our behalf, what we ought to have merited for ourselves had sin not deceived and slain us. This, in fact, is the whole legitimate theology of substitution. It makes provision for man's legal rehabilitation, but has nothing to say in regard to his moral character. It leaves us to suppose that elect men, through the merit of Christ's substitution, shall be pardoned, accepted, carried to heaven, with all the filthy rags of their sin

¹ The late Dr. Duncan.

² *The Atonement*, chaps. iii. v.

still about them. What objection, if the premises were granted, could be made to this on the score of justice? And, if the supreme object of man's life is to find a means of justification with God, what room is there for anything more?

But Christianity is undoubtedly more than a process of vicarious satisfaction to the law. And therefore Calvinism has to make room, in its conception of Christ's work, for the bearing of that work upon the character of men. How does Calvinism do this? How does it emerge from the narrow circle of legal formulas in which it has imprisoned itself? By the assertion that Christ merited for us not only the future possession of heaven, but the present gift of the Holy Spirit.

Well, that is a religious position once more, though it is reached and defended by scholastic arguments. But it is inconsistent with the purely vicarious conception of Christ's work. It is not as a substitute that Christ purchases the Holy Spirit. And, in fact, being inconsistent with what it is joined to, it finally destroys the apparent symmetry and clearness which are the main recommendations of the doctrine of penal substitution. That doctrine teaches that, before God could save men, law had to be satisfied. But no doctrine can possibly teach that, before the Father could send out His Holy Spirit, the Spirit had to be purchased. In the conception of merit, in the conception of purchase, we see the taint of legalism showing itself again. So legal is traditional theology as actually to separate God and Christ. For the lawgiver is not *in* his subject; but God was in Christ. Hence, if we define the work of Christ by legal categories, then, so long as we speak of the Holy Spirit as the gift of the Father's love, we fail to connect the gift with the historical work of Christ; and, on the other hand, as soon as we speak of the gift of the Holy Spirit as having been purchased by Christ, we fail to connect it with the loving purpose of God. What God does, Christ seems not to do. What Christ does, God seems not to do. This is the inevitable penalty of legalism. No doubt, in all its doctrines of substitution, and of penalty, and of purchase, ortho-

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doxy is trying to show that the Almighty God works by moral means in the administration of His purpose of saving men. It is trying to interpret Jesus Christ as the vehicle and instrument of the Father's will. These truths we also, like all other Christians, seek to elucidate. But the forensic theology, at most, only succeeds in alternately praising the purpose of God and the work of Christ. It cannot think them together. Law and grace are incompatibles, whether the works of the law are performed by unfallen Adam, by sinful man, or by Jesus Christ.

In other words, even if we grant the legitimacy of the doctrine that Christ purchased the Holy Spirit, we are left to build our hopes for salvation upon a fact, instead of being encouraged to carry them up to a principle. Genuine Christianity begins with a principle, that God is love, and goes on to a fact, wherein was manifested this principle of love, viz., that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. All God's revelations of character, and all God's deeds of redemption, travel to us through this personal Christ, who has come, and suffered, in the flesh. But if principles without facts are 'empty,' facts without principles are 'blind.' It is a miserable degradation of the religion of Jesus Christ when we are told that He reveals, not the essential character of God, His Father, but—a means of escape from the consequences of sin, which has been provided, we cannot say why. There are some religionists who seem to find a solidity in what we may call the brute fact. If I have been elected, if I have been redeemed, if I have been regenerated, then I am safe—not through anything in myself—not through anything which I can or need comprehend—but through the working of God. So they will tell you. But what an *if* is there! And the complacency of such Christians, precarious at the best, involves their acquiescence in the truth that others are not elected, have not been saved, can never be regenerate; whereas any true faith in God's Fatherly character is *eo ipso* a hope for the whole of mankind. If, instead of a superficial

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relationship of adoption, we have revealed to us the eternal purpose of God's love, then our religion does not separate us from humanity, but gives us a new and holier motive for loving men, because God loves us and them. And there is no vagueness in the revelation of God's character when it comes to us in the gospel of Christ; nor is there anything to hinder us from carrying our hopes out of ourselves and laying them upon God. God my hope—not myself—is the very end of the revelation of God in Christ's redemptive work. That is the venture of faith to which we are called.

To put this again in other words: the question between ourselves and the forensic theology is whether we are worshipping a known or an unknown God. This is true of the substitutionary theory of the Atonement, no less than of the 'Medusa's head' of unconditional election. There is no revelation of character in a substitutionary atonement. There is a revelation of legality; there are associated revelations of God's omnipotence; and certain facts, regarding the Divine proceedings and the proposals of the gospel, are authoritatively communicated to us. But law would have been as fully satisfied by the world's ruin as by the world's redemption. It appears as if God, for unknown reasons, had permitted the work of Jesus Christ and Christ's purchase of the Holy Spirit. Individually we may be invited to audience; we may even be admitted to posts of honour; but the ultimate motive of this treatment is unknown. Our real communion with God is thus denied; we are still worshipping we know not what. This is fatal to the internal evidence for the gospel.

The criticism of the last two paragraphs falls to the ground if we accept the evangelical Arminian doctrine, that God in His love desired to save men, but could not legally do so unless Christ had borne the penalty due to their sin. The chief objection to this theory is, that it does not connect the work of Christ with the gift of the Holy Spirit. On this view, we may recognise the Father as our Saviour, or we may recognise the Spirit as our Saviour; but Christ appears only

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as having concluded certain necessary preliminary arrangements involved in the plan of salvation. No forensic theology can escape from legalism ; it cannot escape the dilemma, God, or man—God, or Christ—which is operative? Over and above this, I think it could be shown that evangelical Arminianism lacks due reverence, and fails to look its own doctrines in the face. The God of the Calvinist, who deliberately foreordains His creatures to eternal sin and eternal misery, is certainly morally incredible. But the God of the evangelical Arminian, whose will is divided against His own nature,—who does His utmost to redeem the human race, and reluctantly sees men (in spite of God's utmost) going on to a certain eternity of sin and misery—such a God is intellectually hard to conceive. However, it is difficult enough to get men to accept a correction of their theology on moral apart from intellectual grounds ; it is almost impossible to get them to accept a correction on grounds of mere intellect. And the first reason named for rejecting evangelical Arminianism seems sufficient,—that it does not connect Christ's work with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Hence we need not press our further criticism of the Arminian position.

v.

Really we can form no just conceptions of Christ's work as our Saviour which do not start from the revelation of God which is made to us through Him. That revelation is eternal life. Socinianism was right in representing Christ's work as primarily a work of revelation, but was very wrong in holding that Christ revealed to us a means of saving ourselves. To know what God essentially is,—to hold communion with God, in His works, in His providence, in His grace, in the doing of His will,—to be the brothers of Christ, and of mankind, for Christ's sake,—that is the calling which Christ shares with us. Taking our point of departure from this thought, we can easily perceive that the knowledge of God in sinful man presupposes God's gift of pardon. And hence we are constrained to seek, and find, in Jesus Christ, not only the efful-

gence of God's glory, but the messenger of forgiveness, and the redeemer from sin. On the other hand, starting from the question, how to attain pardon, we can never embrace in our system the whole fulness of Christian truth and life. Legality is only a subordinate aspect of God's revelations. Pardon is only one of man's many needs—one of God's many gifts. In subjective experience, doubtless, the question of justification may come first. Religious earnestness may well begin with conviction of sin; and, through the channel thus opened, all the revelations of God's Spirit may press in upon the soul. But what is it that enters? Not simply the craving for pardon—not simply the assurance of pardon, or of a justifying righteousness in Christ,—but a hunger and thirst after the service of God which are the pledge of their own full satisfaction through God in Christ. Sin would not be so evil if it were only a breach of law. Man would not be so sunken and so broken by his estrangement from God if only his formal relations to God's jurisprudence were disturbed. It is the source of our life, of our peace, of our joy that we forfeit by sin; it is life, peace, joy that we regain when we are brought back to our Father's house. God is the chief end of man (not merely the glory of God), and, as our chief end, God is the only possible source of eternal satisfaction to us. And Christ is named Immanuel—God with us.

In the character of God, revealed by Christ, we have the spring of all possible thankful service, the germ of all legitimate Christian doctrine. To us sinners our Lord reveals His Father's heart as condemning us, yet calling us back to forgiveness and to renewed fellowship with Him. It is in Christ that we are forgiven; 'the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sin'; He is authorised to give us this promise, from lips that never deceive. But the sacrifice of Christ's death is the perfect reconciliation of earth and heaven,—the full assurance of God's mercy to the repentant. For why should death befall the Son of God—and such a death? Glorious as may be the love of Christ in accepting death, how can we

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explain that the Father should impose it on Him? If it is not a vicarious penalty, is it in any sense necessary? The answer is complex. From the point of view of the individual believer, it is necessary that the Lord should have not only suffered but died, in order that, by Christ's resurrection, and by His message of forgiveness, the believer may be assured that God's love is stronger than man's sin. From the point of view of the community, it is necessary that Christ should die in order that He may exhibit the true scope and nature of sin, and thus may work repentance in those whom He redeems. From the point of view of God's purpose, it is necessary for the full development of Christ's obedience in His vocation that He should prove Himself faithful in the last trial of all,—in death. God has chosen, in His righteousness and grace, to send blessing to the world through the mission of Christ. He has chosen that hope should arise for us from Christ's overcoming the forces of sin. And, though we cannot explain the mechanism by which God communicates blessing to the individual soul, we can see that, in the course of God's ordinary providence, grace comes to the souls of men through the knowledge of Christ incarnate, and assurance of pardon comes to them through the knowledge of Christ crucified. We may still say, with the orthodox, that the sufferings of Christ are God's warrant to forgive sin. But we must always beware of seeming to imply any antagonism of mercy to justice in God. God's love is the radiance of His righteousness; God's justice is the sternness of His love. And it is no less false, to hint, or to seem to hint, that, apart from God's arbitrary will, it might be possible for salvation to come to men in an unrighteous way. God's 'grace' cannot be conceived as 'reigning' unless 'through righteousness.' It is not legality that demands the suffering and death of Christ, while the moral uses of the gospel are independent of them. The moral influence of Christ could not operate if He were not known as bringing forgiveness. God forgives men in Christ because Christ is the pledge of repentance and new obedience on the part of His converts.

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For other moral elements of the gospel, the cross of Christ is no less necessary than it is for repentance and for the assurance of pardon. The cross is our supreme lesson in patience; and, if God's favour was with Christ even at the darkest, we may believe that God is working out a purpose of mercy in ourselves, even when most He seems to be hostile to us. Again, the cross is the supreme manifestation of self-sacrifice; and self-sacrifice is the primary law of Christian obedience.

Still further, once it is plain that Christ's death is not an accident or a superfluity of suffering, but is necessary for His mission, it becomes the supreme revelation of God. Suffering for suffering's sake reveals nothing; but suffering for the salvation of others reveals love. That God is love is a proved fact; 'the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me'; 'God so loved the world that He gave His Son.' The inmost essence of the Divine character is expressed and realised in the suffering Saviour, as all universes and all history could never have embodied it. This is the supreme glory with which our God has crowned Himself,—the glory of supreme sacrifice.

By the denial of Christ's penal substitution for us we do not then disparage the cross of Christ, or hurry away from it to other parts of His ministry. True, we like to connect the cross with the life and teaching of Christ more than orthodoxy has been wont to do,—more perhaps than the Apostle Paul was wont to do, who had not known Christ during His humiliation, and for whom the significance of Christ's appearance was concentrated in the supreme hour of His suffering. We like to verify His claims in His words—His claim to reveal God, to forgive sin, to go before us in faith and obedience, 'leaving us an example that we should follow His steps.' Nevertheless it is in the Crucified that we too find the supreme revelation, the supreme assurance, the supreme example. It is in the apprehension of suffering yet omnipotent love that we are born into a new life.

We can now estimate the truth or falsity of a statement frequently made,—that the moral aspects of the Atonement

presuppose its substitutionary character, and that the acceptance of the doctrine of substitution necessarily leads the soul into full moral loyalty to Jesus Christ. All that is true here is, that we must apprehend the moral necessity of our Lord's death before it can produce its moral influence on our hearts. That is indeed true; but we are not bound to explain moral necessity as arising out of penal law. On the contrary; if we do so, we can never legitimately advance to the moral influences of Christ upon ourselves. The doctrine of substitution is intent upon a quantum of suffering, or a quantum of merit; Christ's moral influence is personal. Having begun with the law, we cannot end in the Spirit. If we start with a mechanical conception of the procuring of grace, we must end with a mechanical conception of the application of grace. The regenerating omnipotence of the Holy Spirit is the only proper corollary to the doctrine of substitution; and what has 'irresistible grace' to do with moral influences? Yet the attempt to vindicate the doctrine of substitution by connecting it with the moral side of the gospel is very interesting. It is a proof of what we have been affirming all through this paper,—that pious people are not attached to orthodoxy for its own sake, but for the sake of obtaining a logically definite expression of their dependence on Divine grace. If they could only believe that such a logical expression of dependence may be got in other ways, and that it may be made quite as definite as is compatible with reverence or desirable in itself—then orthodox theology might cease to be legal, and might, in these last days, become moral.

The New Testament definitions of Christianity declare it to consist in belief in Christ, as the personal channel of salvation. But the New Testament nowhere declares that salvation is bound up with any intellectual theory of the *rationale* of the Atonement. Usage taught New Testament writers to call our Lord's death a sacrifice. They do not explain the religious meaning of sacrifice; the custom was too familiar to seem to need explanation. It certainly did not mean penal

substitution; there is scarcely a trace of that doctrine in Old Testament law or prophecy. In the foregoing paragraphs, we have enumerated the moral functions which the death of our Lord Jesus Christ performs in the hearts of those who believe that He is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. That belief is the faith required of us in the New Testament; and, as the New Testament does not ask our adherence to any theory of atonement, it would seem that we are safest in carrying back the verifiable moral consequences of Christ's work to the purpose of God, and in taking these as our commentary on the doctrine of Atonement. One other remark here: as long as God's gift to man is viewed as being primarily the knowledge of God Himself, there is no danger of Pelagianism. We cannot, on these lines, represent man as a self-sufficient being. Nor can we suppose that man can come to know God otherwise than so far as God is pleased to reveal Himself.

VI.

According to what we regard as correct views of the Atonement, it is impossible to separate the work of Christ from His influence upon those for whom He lived and suffered. In a moral theology, the impetration and application of redemption run together. Accordingly, in stating our own view of Christ's atonement, we have already spoken briefly of the act of faith in man. Calvinism however holds very far apart the work of Christ and man's faith in Christ. And we may now inquire what is the Calvinistic doctrine of faith.

In the first place, we must protest that Calvinism ought not to be allowed to bring forward any doctrine of saving faith. Faith is a moral and spiritual principle in the human mind. But the Calvinistic theory of salvation is purely mechanical. It teaches that Jesus Christ has taken the place of a certain number of elect souls, and that, in consequence of Christ's work, the Holy Spirit irresistibly necessitates the salvation of the elect. We have already pointed out that, on the theory of

substitution, there is really no room for a process of change in man's character. And, even if there is to be a process of change irresistibly effected, one does not see how it should appear in consciousness under the form of faith, whether you interpret faith as belief or as trust.

This may have the appearance of an unfair criticism, since the aim of evangelical Calvinism is to make plain the operation of God's grace,—to show that the man who is joined to God in Christ has all fulness of life and righteousness, not in himself but in his Saviour. Does Calvinism succeed, however? That is the question. On its doctrine, what is there in the revelation of God that can appeal to faith? There is nothing in the Divine character, as interpreted by the forensic theology, which can afford a ground of hope to sinners. It is not God's nature or character but His will that is said to initiate our salvation. Everything is made to depend on a motiveless or inscrutable purpose. Hence, while Calvinism gives a very comfortable doctrine to those who are once inside the charmed circle of electing grace, it is a very doctrine of despair to all the rest of the world. Justification by conversion—justification by regeneration—may be legitimately deduced from Calvinistic premises. But such justification is a comfortable thought only to those who have undergone it. Justification by faith cannot be evolved out of Calvinism.

Nevertheless, the Bible writers generally, and the apostle Paul very particularly, have taught that the sinner is justified by faith. And, if religion is to spread at all, it must make some psychological appeal to men. Hence it is necessary for Calvinism to represent faith as being in some way the psychological antecedent, or what it calls the 'instrumental cause,' of salvation. But of what nature is this faith?

The Westminster Confession mixes up two wholly distinct definitions. It refers faith alternately to the intellect and to the will, representing it now as belief, and again as trust. The first of these definitions is given, xiv. § ii., 'By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the

word, for the authority of God Himself speaking therein.' But, by the end of the same paragraph we have the other definition implied: 'The principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.' The intervening clauses unite these two definitions by pointing out that there are different acts of saving faith 'upon that which each particular passage containeth, . . . obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and' the embrace of 'the promises of God.' All this is thoroughly confused. If Christian faith is belief—belief of everything that is in the Bible—then the so-called acts of saving faith are simply results or proofs of faith. They do not themselves save a man, if they presuppose 'saving faith.' Thus, on this deliberate definition, 'receiving and resting upon Christ' does not save a man; believing that the Bible is true saves a man; and, in the case of the saved, the belief of the Bible produces emotions which may be described—popularly and incorrectly—as 'receiving and resting upon Christ.'

Nor is this first and normative part of the definition of 'saving faith' any chance blunder. It runs through the system of the Confession. Thus, in I. § iv., we learn that 'the authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God.' In other words, Calvinism rightly feels that a Christian's belief is part of his religion no less than his emotions. But how do we know that what we believe is the word of God? The answer is given in I. § v.: 'our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.' Psychologically that just means, we believe because we cannot help ourselves; we believe because we are irresistibly necessitated to believe. Of course we hope that the good Spirit of God is the source of this non-rational

and unverifiable certainty; but it may not be so. Our belief may be a hallucination; or it may be wrought in our hearts by a lying spirit. Some of us believe in the doctrine of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* because we hold that, looked at from the subjective point of view, the witness spoken of is that assurance which grows up in a life of faith, repentance, and well-doing. On this view, the doctrine is verifiable in experience. But to identify the special operations of the Holy Spirit with the process of moral life in general is to take leave of Calvinism. Hence this first part of the confessional doctrine of faith remains firmly entrenched on Calvinistic ground. We believe the Bible, it says, because we are irresistibly necessitated to do so, by a process which is not rational and is not moral, and which we therefore call spiritual.

According to the definition, this is saving faith. But it is awkward to describe Christian faith as a mental belief lying outside the region of personal religious life. A man might believe the Bible with feverish earnestness, yet feel himself hopelessly estranged from God. Hence the second and incongruous part of the confessional definition, according to which faith is 'the accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for' salvation. This is the more experimental, or perhaps one ought to say, the more Christian part of the definition. This, accordingly, is the view of faith given in the section on justification. Faith (XI. § ii.), 'receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification.' On this view of faith, 'head' knowledge of the gospel is presupposed; how it is come by, we need not stop to inquire; and religious faith is the subsequent act of will by which a man resolves to cast himself on the mercy of God in Christ.

Probably this conception of faith represents the way in which men have really got spiritual help from the orthodox doctrine. Every sinful soul, under any form of religion, who has even a dim apprehension of Divine mercy, knows something of faith in this sense of the word. And every such experience is infinitely sacred. Every such experience has the mark of God's Holy

Spirit upon it. But must not Christian faith have something in it to differentiate it from the half-faith of a Pagan soul groping after God? And must not a Calvinistic doctrine of faith fit on more definitely to the Calvinistic theory of grace? It is not God's abstract mercy that the sinner is invited to rest upon, but 'Christ's finished work.' What is the nature of that work? If it is a substitution, must not Christian faith have an explicit regard to Christ as our substitute? That would account for the extraordinary importance which 'evangelicalism' attaches to its theory of the Atonement. In other words, this second part of the confessional definition of faith seems to be capable of doing valuable practical service. But theoretically it is very defective. It points the soul to the mercy of God—not to the work of Christ; or it points the soul to Christ, but not in that aspect which Calvinism regards as His central 'office.' A fuller and truer theory might prove a better theory, practically as well as speculatively.

The most accurate expression of the Calvinistic doctrine of saving faith, so far as my knowledge goes, is found in an *obiter dictum* of the late Principal Candlish. 'There is room' for God's 'arranging, that, through the gracious interposition of His own Son, meeting on my behalf the inviolable claims of justice, His wrath should be turned away from me; and, if from me, from others also *willing to acquiesce in the arrangement.*'¹ So bald a statement as this can hardly be paralleled; and some may think us unfair if we attach importance to it. But we have chosen it, not because it is extreme, but because it is exceptionally well put, from the forensic point of view. For, if the work of Christ is essentially a substitutionary arrangement, what else can faith be than assent to that arrangement? Human assent is the natural complement of the legal-fiction theory of Atonement. And, instead of repudiating Dr. Candlish's statement, orthodox people would do better, for their own cause, if they pointed out how large an amount of Christianity could be

¹ Quoted by Hutton, *Theological Essays*, 'Romanism, Protestantism, and Anglicanism.'

packed into that formula. In order to assent to the arrangement by which Another takes your place, you must be convinced of your own helplessness and guilt. If you have good grounds for believing that your assent is legally valid before God, and makes it incumbent on Christ to provide for your case, then you may have great peace and immediate assurance. And again, if you enjoy such peace through the surrender of self-righteousness and through consent to Christ's acting in your stead, is it not natural that feelings of gratitude should spring up in your heart which will produce an influence on your life? It may not be a completely Christian formula; but it is quite as Christian as Calvinism ever was or ever will be.

We should remember that, according to Calvinism, one cannot assent to the 'arrangements' proposed to one in the gospel, except the Holy Spirit be given to one. This is an instance of the way in which different doctrines hang together. If you describe saving faith as consisting in assent to a substitutionary arrangement, and if you assert that all men who hear the gospel are capable of saving faith, you take the Christian religion out of the region of morality altogether. To assent to an arrangement which costs one nothing, which is well guaranteed, and which promises one the greatest conceivable blessings,—who would not be a Christian upon these terms? But, when it is added that, however manifestly the arrangement makes for your advantage, and however simple the act of assenting to it, you cannot perform the act unless the Holy Spirit constrains you to do so,—then it is seen that, after all, you are a moral being, dependent upon God. Morality is saved at the eleventh hour; and the doctrine of inability, which at first sight appeared merely odious, turns out to be a link by which the theology of substitution is connected with the postulates of moral life. At the same time, the paradox of Calvinism comes to a head here. You can do nothing spiritually good without grace; you cannot even indicate your formal consent to an arrangement which every motive urges you to adopt, and which demands of you absolutely no spiritual conditions! The

statement is dogmatically necessary, beyond a doubt, to the Calvinist. But psychologically it is absurd.

As so often before, we see here the influence of the legalist antithesis between Divine and human, Christ and the Christian. Either Christ works for my redemption, says the Calvinist, or I myself work. Therefore my psychological contribution to the new life—if the Bible forces me against my will to postulate a psychological contribution on my own part—must have absolutely no moral goodness about it. Moral goodness is contributed to this partnership by the Saviour; the sinner brings with him only his sins. If I were to allow so much as a grain or a drop of ethical goodness in 'saving faith,' I should detract from the alone efficiency of Christ. This is the plain English of all the evangelical rhetoric, in which faith is described as 'only a hand.' Metaphors are very convenient for those who wish to avoid coming to close grapples with thought. But they have the disadvantage that they intimate to a moderately competent critic that there is a weak point in their neighbourhood. Faith is 'a hand,' then, just because it is an act of assent to a proposed arrangement. Faith, in other words, is receptive; but we know already that what faith is to receive is a legal righteousness; we know already that faith is expected to work with the substitutionary theory of the Atonement. If Christian faith were a mere receptiveness of spiritual blessings, then it would take no cognisance of forensic theories, and the orthodox doctrine of atonement must be only a speculation, with no direct bearing on the religious life. But, if orthodoxy cannot concede that, it must grant that the metaphorical 'hand' of saving faith is literally 'assent to an arrangement.'

We, for our part, are not legalists. We recognise the mysteriousness of the religious life, and do not feel bound to parcel out its stages mechanically, according to the type of physical causation, or to draw a sharp line between God's work and man's own. Hence we have no hesitation in affirming—what every Christian, surely, would like to affirm—that the first

psychological symptom of the Christian life must be moral and spiritual, no less than its last and highest manifestation. Thinking so, we have reason enough for rejecting Principal Candlish's forensic doctrine of saving faith. And even orthodox forensic theologians must be aware, that this doctrine has seldom or never played a part in the religious life of any man. No one ever conceived his own conversion as having consisted in his 'assent to an arrangement.' Multitudes in the olden time have conceived of conversion as a personal covenant with heaven, and have written out their contract with the Redeemer; but such a mutual engagement is a totally different thing from simple assent to the finished work of Christ. In fact, we can see that Dr. Candlish's formula would be very embarrassing to the revivalist. The latter wishes his 'anxious inquirers' to forget themselves; the formula concentrates attention upon self. He wishes to induce faith; the formula, in its completed form, brings out into sharp relief the impossibility of faith, which the 'anxious' *ex hypothesi* too keenly feel. The formula may be true, but it is eminently unserviceable.

The consequence is, I think, that evangelists generally fall back upon the bare definition of faith as belief. They press an 'anxious inquirer' with such a text as Isa. liii. 6, or John iii. 16, —with statements of the fact of redemption: 'Do you believe that?' they ask. 'Oh, yes,' says the other. 'Then,' say they, 'you have faith, you see—and you are saved.' This is certainly an extremely frequent method of the 'inquiry room.' And it is surely one whose illogical and irreligious character must be admitted by every competent judge. Millions 'believe' to the same extent in the notional propositions of the creed, who are as far as possible from living 'by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.' When the Westminster Confession represents faith as a mere belief, it safeguards the moral side of the truth by requiring belief to be supernaturally produced. Moreover, if a man does not believe, he cannot be made to stop doubting by the most impassioned assurances that his eternal welfare depends upon

his embracing a certain set of opinions. He may wish to believe; but a wish to believe is neither belief nor evidence. The human mind is an extremely imperfect machine for the discovery of truth; but it is not thoroughly alien to truth, as it must be, if our convictions came and went at the mercy of our own caprices. Indirectly, we may do much, by will or by wilfulness, to further or to impede our attainment of truth; but by direct volition we can neither believe nor disbelieve.

The method fails in many cases; but undoubtedly there are cases in which it works well. The theory of substitution is one way of expressing the soul's dependence upon Christ. It is a very complex and intricate theory; and it may well be that those who have grown up in nominal orthodoxy have never accurately apprehended the lie of the doctrines which they profess. Then a time comes when, by good means or bad, their selfish fear or their conscience has been awakened. Probably there is a great deal of selfishness and a saving dash of conscience in their alarms. When, in their new state of anxiety, the doctrine of substitution is presented to them, it wears an entirely new aspect. Formerly it was a curiosity, or less than that—a tedium, perhaps; now, it is very salvation. The shock of surprise which they feel in having this interesting and relevant doctrine put before them gives the mind a jolt, which, to themselves, seems to mark a new personal attitude towards that Christ of whom the doctrine speaks, and which—we are so strangely constituted—does perhaps make it easier for them to take a fresh start in spiritual life. But, if this analysis is correct, the inquiry-room theology does not owe its success to treating faith as notional belief. It succeeds, partly because of the increased interest which an awakened conscience will take in any representation of the gospel offer; and partly it succeeds through mere confusion of mind. Besides these cases of success, we must remember that there are many cases of failure, and of worse than failure.

VII.

In those cases which succeed, when a real spiritual life grows out of the crude teaching regarding faith given by orthodoxy, or given in connection with orthodoxy, something takes place. Can we see at all what takes place? Can we put any better account of Christian or 'saving' faith in the room of those accounts which we have rejected?

Essentially, we conceive that faith is the right attitude of the human spirit towards God, its Father. Thus faith includes the two elements of belief and trust. Under different circumstances, these elements may be differently combined. But in all cases there is a moral element in religious belief no less than in religious trust. Such belief rests upon moral grounds. The evidence for the being of God, or for the gospel of Christ, does not rise above probability, and makes part of its appeal to us because we feel, if we may so speak, that religion ought to be true, and that, whether its tenets be certain or uncertain, we ought so to frame our lives that we may suffer no shock if death should usher us into the presence of God, and arraign us before the judgment-seat of Christ. But religion does not call upon us to live out alone, in our own strength, this life of ideal faithfulness. 'Natural' religion—to speak of it for a moment by way of abstraction—tells us that God will be with us; and the gospel message promises us the indwelling of Jesus Christ Himself—if we have faith to receive these things as true.

When any one is brought into a state of anxiety on account of the consequences of sin, then the doctrine of God's justice, which formerly meant nothing to him, plays upon his soul with all its terrors. In other words, that part of Christian doctrine becomes a reality to the man, and verifies itself in his experience. This is one way in which the religious life may be expected to begin. But it is not the only way; and when it is treated as being normative—when the 'anxious soul' is represented as the normal representative of man, in presence

of the gospel, and when men argue from this—we are forced to go further back, and to inquire, What is the type of religious teaching which has made this the commonest initial form of Christian experience? May it not be that religious teaching has unduly fostered man's self-engrossment, so that his very piety is more or less morbid? Still, as we have said, fear, distress, alarm, even blind and selfish alarm, may be expected often to show themselves when sinners begin to turn to God. The dread of punishment is something more than a selfish fear; there is conscience in it; 'conscience doth make cowards of us all'; the most craven fear of punishment may be a beginning, by which God's Spirit reasserts in man, through course of time, the whole of the truth—man's original or proper kinship with God, his fall by sin, and his recovery by the grace of God in Christ.

For the degree of faith which is expressed in the terrors of conscious guilt does not amount to Christian faith properly so called. Before we can have that, we must have the apprehension of God's redeeming mercy. If the religious life has begun with the consciousness of guilt, faith will show itself when the hope of forgiveness dawns upon the soul. And every such hope, which is sincerely and humbly embraced, and which is historically mediated by the revelation of God in Christ, is Christian faith. Whether it have any theory of the Atonement, or none, it implies the fact of the Atonement itself; it implies the presence of Christ, through His Spirit, reconciling the soul to the Father. At such a time the Christian facts become morally credible—mercy no less than judgment. It reveals itself as a saying worthy of all acceptance, that Christ came to save sinners. The character of God as our Father, condemning sin yet redeeming sinners, shines in its own light. And the promise of Christ shines in its own light when He tells us that He is the way, and the only way, to the Father.

But, if the Christian life does not begin with remorse—it must always include repentance—then, in a more normal

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development, it may show the elements of faith more plainly. Faith includes belief, both in God and in Christ. Christian faith believes that God is the maker and ruler of all things, who speaks in our consciences, proclaiming right and wrong, —who is present in all created goodness, and purity, and aspiration—who is irresistible in power, and whose purpose stands fast. It also believes that Christ is come in the flesh, the witness of God, His revealer to sinful men, our supreme verification of the unseen spiritual world. It believes, through Christ, that God is both righteous and forgiving; and it believes that forgiveness and redemption come to us, by inscrutable spiritual channels, through Christ and for Christ's sake. Such is a Christian's belief. But his faith includes an element of personal trust as well. When our belief realises that there are full channels of God's providence and of God's grace besetting our lives on every side, laying claim to us personally, and promising to carry us through the trials of life to its Divine goal—faith is the willing consent of the heart to this. Such, I take it, is an outline of the faith of a Christian man. Such is justifying faith.

In all this there is no possibility of distinguishing mechanically between God's gift and man's performance. It is an indissoluble Divine unity—a communion with God, which must sink into nothing if God were to withdraw Himself. That man reaches full blessedness in the life of faith constitutes no ground for inferring that man could do something or anything by himself, apart from God. It is in no sense arbitrary that faith should be the instrument of salvation; faith is the atmosphere of the Christian and moral life. Belief in an objective tendency of the universe towards righteousness—*i.e.* in the will and purpose of God—is necessary, if man is to pursue the moral life with any constancy, or with any good measure of success. Faith in God as our help, even when we have sinned—in God as our only life, and in God in Christ as holy, just, and loving,—Christianity implies such faith; but, where you have that faith, you have the beginning of salvation, the germ

of all moral achievements. It is strange that God's grace should save sinful men; it would be stranger if God's grace did not save repentant and believing men. 'A just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Him.'

We hold then that Christian faith properly and naturally includes assurance of God's love. Post-Reformation theologians were right in denying that this is invariably the case; but it was a piece of morbid scholasticism to break up mature faith into two separate things—first saving faith, a direct act of mind, without assurance of salvation; secondly, assurance as a reflex act. It is our duty to examine ourselves; but, if we do not get the comfort of faith by looking to Christ, we cannot get it. I do not enter into my Father's love by demonstrating that I am a promising child, but by knowing and believing the love which God has to me.

Faith may also be identified with the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the Word of God. For the Word of God does not properly mean the miscellaneous detail of the New Testament, but its general drift, as a witness to Christ,—'that Christ came into the world to save sinners,' and that 'God was in Christ.' It is in yielding ourselves trustfully to God's purpose that we believe in Christ. It is in our faith, or in our assurance, that the witness of God by His Spirit utters itself in our hearts. Thus, by the Witness of the Spirit—in other words, by Christian faith,—we know whatever it most concerns us to know about the Bible. We feel and respond to the moral probability that Christ is the Son of God. Details as to the way in which the Bible record was put together may be left to be determined by a reverent science.

And is moral probability all? There can be nothing else, if we are indeed moral beings, under probation, subject to discipline. But moral probability grows with the growth of character. 'There is great value in the opinion of wise and good men.' The pure in heart see God. Thus the assurance of faith is not a constant quantity; it grows with the development of life and character. No one is below its level; but

how incomparably higher we may rise beyond our present standing! In doing the known will of God—with confession, and trust, and prayer—we learn assuredly of Christ's doctrine that it is God's.

VIII

In dealing with faith, it may be possible to show without use of Calvinistic conceptions that man is not independent of God. But does the same thing hold of virtue? Man's spiritual life consists not merely in apprehension of the truth,—*i.e.* in knowledge, or faith,—but also in the doing of the right. Now, in regard to the knowledge of the truth, we may have safeguarded the doctrine of grace by pointing out that God is the proper object of human faith. But can we show that, in morals, man's achievement is equally inseparable from God? Have we not laid it down in an earlier part of this paper that man, even in his condition as a sinner, has a certain capacity for doing right, and must have, if he is to be regarded as under probation? Let it be remembered that Christian faith does not teach our dependence merely upon the God of the universe, but upon God in Christ.

Such have been, I think, the feelings under which orthodox doctrines of the Spirit's working have been developed. In order to safeguard the doctrine of God's grace in Christ, men have thought necessary to represent saving grace as a peculiar supernatural department of human experience, hermetically sealed against all others. We understand the motive, and we appreciate it. But is the logic, on which it proceeds, rigorously necessary? We think not. And, as God is everywhere present,—as His providence runs through all creation,—it seems natural rather to assume that God's grace is the flowering and consummation of His ordinary providence,—that all agencies in the world, Christian or heathen, which have a trace of moral goodness in them, are worked up into Christ's purpose, and that saving grace is not a special magical gift, but a thing spiritual and moral.

The orthodox Augustinian view, with its opposite representation, can be deduced directly from its fundamental conception of grace. If it is because of sin that man is dependent on God, then the remedy for sin must be a special Divine operation, separate from God's natural providence. In other words, we may leave out of account the doctrine of Atonement, and yet we shall be able to explain, from its anthropological assumptions, why Calvinism holds to a doctrine of irresistible grace. Hence even a book, like *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, which exaggerates the Calvinistic theory of human dependence, and which has no room in logic for any doctrine of the Atonement, is soundly orthodox in its theory of conversion. And so will it be with every religionist who believes in total depravity and sudden regeneration. He will have to refer Divine grace to something wholly apart from God's moral providence,—to something not moral but magical, not righteous but arbitrary. He will have to separate religion from morality; he will be found insisting on some special technical kind of goodness. The position is one of frightful danger.

Nor is it only as compared with the ordinary moral forces of God's providence that His regenerating omnipotence seems a strange thing; regenerating grace is no less strange in comparison with the subsequent development of Christian life. Calvinism can hardly keep from Arminianising as to the life of sanctification, *i.e.* it almost always represents the Christian life as a sphere where Divine causation and human, free will and grace, omnipotence and finitude, the eternally pure and the sinful, co-operate with each other. It is generally held that, in the development of the Christian life, God gives sufficient grace for every duty, and that, where man fails, he does not fail by necessity because of original sin, but fails through wilful or heedless neglect of grace. Few Calvinists are robust enough to teach that all sin is due to God's withdrawal of grace, and every victory to the unqualified and unrelated omnipotence of God,

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galvanising the sinner into a semblance of holiness. Well then, we know that God works in the world, in His ordinary providence, by moral means, and in the pursuance of moral ends. And we also know that, in dealing with the sinful will of man, God habitually reveals Himself as inviting us to be workers together with Him. To speak of God's 'help' in grace is to give an inadequate account of our absolute dependence on Him; yet the expression brings out other truths, of not less importance,—that God treats us as responsible and free beings, and that His operation does not supersede our own, but calls it into life. The question then is, must we think of regeneration as an activity of God's grace wholly distinct from His providence, and wholly distinct from His sanctifying influence? God can produce moral effects without using irresistible grace; for He does so in providence. God can produce moral effects even in sinful souls without overbearing the human will; for He does so in sanctification. Why must we postulate magic at one moment, and only one, in the history of human salvation? Because you cannot otherwise conceive of absolute dependence on God? Really, is your impotence of thought to legislate for the working of God's Spirit? And do you mean to say, that, when you are a subject of God's providential dealings, or of His sanctifying grace, you are not absolutely dependent on Him? Or, if you confess your absolute dependence in these cases, in which it is not guaranteed as you wish it to be, may you not be absolutely dependent on God for the first stirrings of His grace in your heart, though He does not come to you with mechanical compulsion?

The real motive for the doctrine of man's passivity in regeneration is, that dependence on grace is thought to arise out of sin. Hence the contribution of sinful man towards the Divine-human process of the new life can only be a passivity. But observe that, on this view, the characteristically Divine contribution towards the new life—or rather, the omnipotent act which constitutes the new life—is confined to one magical

moment. It is alleged indeed that its effects are inamissible. But that is a mere dogmatic postulate hanging in the air, which has to be so carefully 'guarded' that it is, in effect, explained away.

There are, however, additional motives, which accrue at this particular stage in the scheme of theology, of a kind to reinforce the Calvinistic conception of grace.

One is an intellectual or scientific motive; I should prefer to call it a pseudo-scientific motive. Our ideas of what God's grace is accomplishing grow far more definite, if we are able to argue that every true Christian is saved because God chose to save him,—that every elect but unconverted soul remains unconverted because God has not yet chosen to convert him,—and that every lost soul is lost because God has never chosen to save him. It makes our conception of grace charmingly definite if we can conceive of it wholly on the analogy of a physical force. And poor Dr. Hodge, laboriously collecting the character and operations of God by 'Baconian induction' out of an infinite heap of texts, cannot afford to despise anything that will make his conceptions clearer, and his task easier. In our own day, it has struck one ingenious writer to base an apologetic argument on the fact that Calvinism regards grace as a 'natural law in the spiritual world.' Precisely. It is the most damning criticism that ever has been passed on Calvinism, and it is richly deserved. Almost all the blows aimed at Professor Drummond fall in the first instance upon John Calvin; and they also are richly deserved. Unfortunately, the discussion is not allowed, by dogmatists, to exert any influence on their doctrinal systems. They abjure Drummond and all his works with the apologetic fraction of their minds, while they glorify and extol Calvin with the doctrinal fraction.

The second motive which comes in here to reinforce the idea of irresistible grace is of a more directly religious kind; though again I should prefer to call it a pseudo-religious motive. It is as follows: I cannot feel assured of my salva-

tion, one will tell you, unless I am allowed to refer it in thought to sovereign, irresistible grace, saving me in spite of myself, sinful wretch that I am! One might deal with this argument in different ways. M'Leod Campbell quaintly criticises it by quoting Deut. xvi. 19 (freely), 'A bribe blinds the eye of a judge'¹—in plain English, 'Are you entitled to believe in a doctrine because it makes you comfortable? Ought you not to be suspicious of your own mind when you know you have a selfish interest in making good one particular view?' But the sort of religious disinterestedness, which Campbell postulates, you will hardly get from any born and bred Calvinist—no, not till the third or fourth generation—their own religion having taught them to regard spiritual selfishness as the supreme all-mastering duty. I should rather criticise the nature of the comfort people get from such a doctrine. Let us follow a favourite plan of Dr. Hodge's, and take it as expressed for devotional purposes in a hymn—not at all the crudest hymn that could be quoted:—

' Once in Him, in Him for ever,
 So th' eternal cov'nant stands ;
 None shall pluck thee
 From the Strength of Israel's hands !'

Once in Him—what a comfort is here! Not the Fatherliness of the Father,—not the character of God, in any shape or form, but a mere accidental fact—a piece of exceptional good fortune (is it anything more?) Finally, this is our true hope; the character of God, revealed as working in Christ for our salvation, 'willeth not the death of a sinner,' and willeth the 'endurance to the end' of a saint. God's friendship, on God's part, is everlasting. We have every comfort that we ought to have, or can have, in knowing this. We are secure against everything except wilful sin; and nothing can, or ought, to secure us against that. God reveals Himself under the moral conditions of our lot; yet He does reveal an eternal constant love—from everlasting and to everlasting.

¹ *Nature of the Atonement*, p. 57.

Another motive might be alleged for believing in irresistible regenerating grace,—that it gives clear proof of man's dependence on the historical Christ. Is not sudden miraculous conversion a great witness to the gospel? Yes; it is a witness, in its own place; but it is no proof of the divinity of the gospel. Every earnest moral system which sets itself to seek them reaps a harvest of sudden conversions—more or fewer. Thus you do not gain from Calvinism what you might seem to gain for Christian apologetics. And do we really wish to prove that it is impossible for God to save any soul except through the 'outward and ordinary' channels of grace?

We conclude therefore that the motives, old or new, for believing in irresistible grace, all fail. Calvinism may gain in plausibility at this point; but argumentatively it breaks down just as it does all along the line.

And, if the motives of the Calvinistic theory of conversion fail to satisfy us, the objections to the theory are of the gravest kind. First, and worst, it sets a gulf between religion and morality. It asserts that there is a goodness which is human rather than Divine, which never, in all the developments of God's merciful purpose, can lead a man towards God. And it asserts that there is a Divine goodness, which is something mysteriously separate from and superior to ordinary morality. Thus there are, it appears, good gifts among men which do not proceed from the Father of lights, or which, if in some sense they are God's, are more properly man's; and there is an absolute discontinuity between the graces of natural character and the graces of the regenerate heart,—a discontinuity of which no account can be given in terms of moral experience.

Surely, theory apart, Christian men would recognise the mysteriousness of moral life, and, knowing that all goodness comes from God, would desist from the senseless and irreverent attempt to draw lines between one virtue and another,—to say of one, This one man himself is able to attain; it is therefore no better than a splendid sin,—of another, This occurs, you will observe, in a converted person, and therefore is infinitely

acceptable to God. What if the man who exhibits the latter virtue is grudging, jealous, cruel, narrow, hard? What of that? Is he not converted? What if the other is generous, earnest, striving after the best he knows? What of that? Is he not unconverted?

But perhaps it will be said of the regenerate, that they, and they alone, have a supreme regard to the glory of God in every action. I do not underrate the importance of conscious submission to God and of conscious fellowship with Him. But I submit that we cannot conceive rightly of God except in the light of duty. Duty is God, half-veiled in mystery; God is duty, revealed as a living love. Every one who is capable of acting under a sense of duty is capable of giving the first place to Almighty God. Every one who actually performs any duty under a sense of his duty does give the first place in that action to God. On the other hand, every religious person, who separates the thought of God from the thought of duty, sinks into sentimentalism and sins against the spirit of Christ.

Secondly, it does not mend matters, but constitutes a fresh difficulty, when they tell us dogmatically that the regenerate person naturally and necessarily grows holy. For the assertion is unpsychological or even antipsychological, and gives us no help in dealing with the character of men.

I have said above that Calvinism gains in plausibility, and wins fresh adherents, at this point in the theory of grace. Very many Christians cling to a 'high' doctrine of converting grace who are not otherwise attached to Calvinism. But they sometimes devise compromises, by which they endeavour to save themselves from the obnoxious features of the Calvinistic creed. We shall refer briefly to two of these *via mediæ*.

Wesleyanism combines the assertion of total depravity with the assertion of human freedom in dealing with the gospel offer. It holds that all mankind are covered with guilt, and filled with evil, by the sin of Adam, but that Christ's atonement has procured forgiveness of original sin, and a new,

supernatural, unnatural, chance of escape for every human being born into the world.¹

Here it is obvious that a third interest is at work. There is not only the sense of dependence upon God; not only the sense of the guilt of sin; but an endeavour to provide for responsibility by teaching that man is still a free agent. Nor does this endeavour affect only the theory of the gospel offer. Wesley might have been anxious to make the offer of mercy a reality, by asserting the psychological possibility that every hearer of the word should believe and be saved, even though he had not pushed his thoughts so far as to assert the possibility of salvation for every human being, whether Christian or Pagan. In committing himself to that assertion, Wesley betrayed distrust of his own professed principles. If the heathen are guilty in consequence of Adam's first sin, why provide for the artificial and miraculous reconstitution of their free will, by the merit of the Atonement? Is it because God's *love* goes beyond His *justice*? But does love, or justice, best explain a second, personal opportunity, extended to those condemned by imputation? If Wesley had really been arguing deductively from the love of God, would he not have attributed more to its working than a bare chance of salvation? We see much that may be called a proof of God's love in the gifts of the gospel and of moral civilisation; but, in the case of the heathen, we *see* little or nothing in this life that can be said to prove that God loves them. In all probability, moral rather than religious feeling led Wesley to his postulate. That would best correspond with the spirit of his age. He felt uneasy, we may suppose, in sentencing the heathen to hell merely on the ground of Adam's first sin. Hence, while he alleged that they justly deserved to be lost on that account, his theory provided that none should be lost without a second, personal probation, which should include at least a bare chance of escape. We must acknowledge that Wesleyanism is far more tolerable to moral feeling than Calvinism is. But we must question whether it is

¹ I follow the summary statement of Hodge, vol. ii. p. 329.

possible to stop just where Wesley did. And we must question the psychological value of his dogmatic assertion, that human freedom is a superfluity of grace, beyond the claims of justice, earned for us by Christ's Atonement. Also we must dispute the adequacy of a doctrine of atonement which makes the work of Christ lie in a region beneath consciousness,—which makes the Atonement do no more than clear the ground for the exercise of personal religion. Wesley combines ingeniously, but artificially and crudely, the different interests which actuate him. His system teaches that we are free, testifies that we are guilty, and exhibits our dependence on grace; but it does not blend these truths; it does not feel the desirableness of blending them. In the region where Christ atones for us, we are to have no freedom, and are to have a very dubious hesitating sense of responsibility; into the region of our freedom Christ's atonement is not to enter—its merit alone is dogmatically asserted to enter there.

The theory of Julius Müller¹ goes a step further than Wesleyanism. For Müller dwells upon those psychological considerations which Wesley was content to regulate *a priori* on doctrinal grounds. Hence the great champion of German orthodoxy found it necessary to postulate a certain inclination towards good, even on the part of fallen man, without which redemption would have nothing to lay hold of. But Müller seems to have regarded this remainder of goodness as only half good, and therefore as impotent till it was quickened by grace. Here again we must ask, Can the theologian choose where he will stop at the freedom of his own will? Having begun a psychological doctrine of grace, must you not follow it out to its issue? Grace, it would appear, involves a certain amount of good in man; can that be really good which is *a priori* incapable of issuing in a good life? Can you define man as partly good and partly evil, if you add, that the evil in him is omnipotent and the good in him impotent? Are moral forces psychologically conceivable except as endowed with an indefinite

¹ *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, Eng. tr. vol. ii. p. 236.

capacity for growth and for self-realisation? Müller only uses his position to make a crisis of conversion psychologically possible. But what entitles him to take for granted the universal necessity of such a crisis? What justifies him in assuming that the root of goodness in fallen man only springs up in response to a definite augment of grace from without?

IX.

The motive, which induces Müller to make that assumption, is plain enough. He wishes to combine with his doctrine of human freedom and responsibility a doctrine of Divine grace. Hence he gives half to man, half to God. But in doing so he only makes man half free, and God half gracious. If God is in every moral faculty, in every moral truth, of which we are possessed, why need we be jealous of admitting the existence of goodness in fallen man?

The process by which God redeems sinners may be expected to contain mysteries if any process may. Yet some things can surely be asserted as plain and clear. It is clear, on moral grounds, that man as a responsible being has ability to shape his course. It is clear, on religious grounds, that man can have no strength except from God. And it is clear from experience that every man has something of God's image. Hence we regard man as partly depraved and partly righteous; as responsible, because he is not wholly depraved; as righteous, because he still partakes, little as he knows it, in God's moral light and God's moral strength. And thus we regard man's life as a real probation,—a real, though not an equal or easy choice,—though not a choice carried on under uniform conditions—between what is good and what is bad. If it is by God's justice that the individual enjoys his own probation, yet it is by God's mercy that man is invited to so great a salvation in Jesus Christ. And, as the offer of salvation is God's, and all the power is God's, so, too, all the glory belongs to God; not because any man who is saved was wholly wicked,

but because whatever good he had he held of God, and because his salvation largely consists in his learning to acknowledge and confess his dependence on grace. The texts which are abused to found the doctrine of a magical regeneration, in reality only express man's absolute dependence upon God the Father in Christ. And the texts which are abused to describe mankind, before salvation reaches them, as being very devils, in reality only give strong expression to the Christian's sense of the evil of sin as sin, and to his sense of the misery and wickedness of the social state of heathenism,—a society with no aspiration, with no keen remorse, without God in the world, and contented to be so.

In exhibiting how the work of Christ is related to this process of personal salvation, we have to study it from a psychological standpoint. We have abandoned legalism. We have given up the fiction of an absolute severance between God and His sinful children; and therefore we cannot explain the necessity of Christ's work as due to His abolishing that fictitious separation. Doubtless our Lord's work was constituted with a view to our deep guilt and need as sinners; doubtless He has suffered for us, that God the Father might have regard to Christ's work when salvation should be extended to us. But we have to begin our study of Christ's work where it lies within our own experience—not in a region beyond. We are reasonable souls, made in God's image; and Christ saves us as reasonable creatures. We are ignorant; He shows us the Father. We are struck with a chill sense of guilt; He announces forgiveness to us. We misunderstand God's providence; He shows us that our life and peace consist in submission. We know not how to make our way through the snares of the world; He gives us new commandments, sets us a supreme example how they should be kept, and promises to be with us in the keeping of them, through His Spirit. Such are the leading aspects of Christ's influence upon us; and they embody themselves not only in individual lives but in a church and kingdom of God. The life of the individual Christian

presupposes the Christian community, while the Christian community is nothing apart from personal religion in its members.

Now that we have stated this truth, we must next, in a certain sense, cancel it again. Not all the historical and psychological influences that we have named, or that could be named, amount to a doctrine of grace. We must needs begin the study of religion on the lines which moral philosophy has laid down for us. There are not two kinds of truths; and we cannot simply ignore what we have learned in our preliminary studies. 'Everything in nature works according to laws; only the rational being has the capacity of acting according to *the idea* of the laws, i.e. according to principles.'¹ This truth we have learned, and must still respect. But, when we have explained how Jesus Christ gives us truths, impulses, nay even assurances of forgiveness, do we not feel that there is a world unsaid? These are the things with which the apologist is constantly working. Yet they are only the prolegomena of the spiritual life. That life itself implies a deeper relation of man to Christ,—a personal relation; not probability, but moral conviction; not argument, but revelation. 'This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son,—there is Christian belief; and how much further it goes than the apologist can follow it! Christ is as absolute in the Christian religion as God is; God is in Christ, and beside Him there is no God.

What then is the mysterious way into this deeper relation? Faith—simply faith. Christ reveals Himself as the only way to the Father,—the eternal source of righteousness and grace. God reveals Christ as the world's only hope; God has respect to Christ in every gift He bestows on any man. And we believe in Christ as the way, the truth, and the life. We believe that His historical impulses and psychological influences are only fragments of something deeper and more spiritual,—only a witness to the life that is in Him. And

¹ Kant (I borrow the quotation from 'a Brother of the Natural Man').

thus believing we have not only historical influence, but life, through His name.

The sacraments are the chief witness to this mystic inscrutable bond between each Christian soul and Jesus Christ. That every one must die to sin, and rise to forgiveness and holiness with Christ—that every one must eat the flesh of the Son of God, and share the benefit of His shed blood—there is here what no historical or psychological influence can explain. But there is here what the Church of Jesus Christ cannot live without,—what makes the Gospel a gospel,—what makes Christianity a religion and not a school of opinions or manners. Accordingly, the grace of God in Christ works for our redemption through the conscious and trustful submission of our will to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us. We know that all good is God's gift; and we believe and bear witness that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. The sacraments are a witness to God's grace—a channel for God's grace—everything the high churchman can call them, except a substitute for God's grace, or a shackle upon God's free Spirit. And the Church, to which we have already referred, is not only a continuum of Christian opinion but of Christian faith. It never could have spanned the ages had not each true link in it more or less clearly known himself to be in direct personal contact with God the Father of his spirit, and with Jesus his Redeemer.

This spirit of faith being in us—this recognised mystery lying at the heart of our lives—we return to the various moral influences of Christ Jesus, and use them with new reverence and hope. We can never pass beyond them. They would not give us a Christian religion apart from the mystery at their heart; nor would a religion of mere mysteries, without moral auxiliaries, do anything for us. In particular, the recognition of God's grace does not supersede our knowledge of Him as an absolute master whose laws we must obey. There is nothing legal, there is nothing harsh or inharmonious in this principle of Christ's kingdom. Beauty implies the rigour of concealed

law ; and the spiritual beauty of a Christian character is the flowering of a life of faithfulness. What Arnold said of poetry may be said of moral obedience :—

‘Such poets is your bride, the Muse ! young, gay,
Radiant, adorned outside ; a hidden ground
Of thought and of austerity within.’

Any beauty of character, or any religious joy, which does not grow out of the conscientious performance of duty, is hectic and poisonous. There never was a genuine spiritual gift, or a worthy spiritual influence over other men, that was not earned as wages by Christ’s servant. But let no one say that this principle of our Master’s is inconsistent with His grace!

It would seem that, on such a theory as our own, there is no danger of underrating the grace of God. Devout Calvinists generally fear that, if you call man other than passive in relation to his Saviour, you will lead man to infer that if he can do so much with grace, he can surely do something—perhaps everything—without grace. But the life of the redeemed is a Divine-human thing, which cannot possibly lack either of its elements. As well be afraid lest men should drink oxygen instead of water. If salvation is the vision of God, how is man to attain that apart from God ? If the strength of Christian service lies in faith, how can it possibly occur to any Christian that he could serve as well without God ? The faith by which we live is faith in redemption—all essential and all sufficient. True, we find it necessary to affirm that, in man as a free being, though sinful, the abstract psychological conditions exist under which it is ideally possible that man should be won for God without historically knowing the gospel. But the ordinary channel of God’s grace is the knowledge of Christ crucified. And, in His revelation, God declares that all blessing comes to us in virtue of Christ ; the crowning faith to which He calls us—that faith which is life and joy—is an absolute belief in the necessity, as in the sufficiency, of Jesus Christ as our own and the world’s Saviour. Is there anything here that should lead a candid antagonist to charge us with undervaluing

the grace of God, or the work of Christ? We render praise to God from whom all our blessings come, by Jesus Christ through whom all our blessings come.

Probably an ordinary Calvinist would accept our statements as to the work of God's Spirit in those who are saved. He might accept it as satisfactory that all good comes from God—not only the revelation of the Christian redemption, or the impulse to accept it, but the spiritual act in which God's grace is welcomed, and by which it becomes a power in the life. But, in order to safeguard his conception of grace, the Calvinist might think it wiser explicitly to lay down his Calvinistic thesis, that in the non-elect and unsaved God never so works as He does in those who believe. In fact, this is our main quarrel with Calvinism—not as to God's action upon those who are saved, but as to God's inaction in the case of those who are not saved. Is it reverent to argue upon the Divine activity, as if God were one of the forces of nature? Should we not expect that there will be mystery in the tumult of forces good and evil, personal and supernal, which struggle together in the heart of one who is just entering upon the Christian life? Of course, if you define man in himself as diabolical (but no man is ever wholly left to himself in this world), it may seem that grace must be omnipotent, and therefore irresistible. But, if you keep to the truth, that there is both good and bad in every man, so that the worst man living may yet be reclaimed, and the best man living, if he grow presumptuous, may yet be lost,—then you are prepared to conceive that God may work effectually without working irresistibly. In a word, you need not make spirituality exclude morality.

The ordinary Calvinist might accept our attribution of all grace to God as sufficiently reverent, though insufficiently safeguarded by us. But Dr. Hodge's criticism of our views would cut deeper. According to him,¹ "The main point of difference between the later Lutheran, the Arminian, and the Wesleyan schemes, and that of Augustinianism is, that according to the

¹ *Systematic Theology*, vol. ii. p. 330.

latter, God, and according to the former, man, determines who are to be saved.' Observe, Dr. Hodge does not merely insist that the power which saves must be Divine, or that the glory of salvation must accrue to God. He insists that God must determine who is to be saved and who is to be lost. Self-evidently, he thinks, God must do so; any theology which holds different views is at once discredited. In plain words, Dr. Hodge considers it unworthy of God's dignity to lay a free offer of salvation before sinners. For the very making of an offer implies that the recipient of the favour, not the giver, decides whether or not it is to be accepted. If a landlord *offers* to enable his tenantry to emigrate, he does not, for the sake of his dignity, provide that some of them shall be compelled to accept his offer, and that the rest of them shall be compelled to decline it. Say the people are poor; say that he pays travelling expenses for the 'elect,' and refuses to allow any one to pay travelling expenses for the 'reprobate;' then his proposals are not a free offer at all. So, if one wishes to invite the neighbourhood generally to a reception, but is resolved to make sure of having certain people, and to make not less sure of excluding certain others, then one does not affect to throw one's gates open to all comers; one does not pretend to make a free offer if dignity or duty clogs the offer with conditions. Naturally, then, when I find that God Almighty, the most righteous and most loving, makes a free offer of salvation, I assume that it is genuinely free and *bona fide*, not merely in the Calvinistic sense—for the *bona fide* offer of salvation by a Calvinistic God is quite compatible with a fixed resolution to destroy you eternally—but in the straightforward and simple sense of the words. Who is Dr. Hodge, that he should act as guardian of the Divine dignity? Is he in sympathy with the God whom he affects to represent? To my mind, all those Calvinistic conceptions of God's glory 'savour not the things which be of God, but those which be of men;' they are pagan conceptions. Self-seeking is the first and last principle of their deity; self-sacrifice, of the God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, if they were right, that sinners cannot be allowed to accept or reject Christ's gospel, why is the gospel represented in the form of a free offer? Surely, if it is unworthy of God to let the choice of sinners play a part in salvation, it is infinitely more unworthy of God to appeal, to beseech, to implore, to lament—when there is no freedom to take or reject His 'free' offer. One knows what such a proceeding would be on the part of any man. It would be a singularly base and cruel fraud. And it does not change its nature, because theologians choose to impute it to God, the most righteous and most loving.

We hold, then, that God gives a universal sufficient grace with the hearing of the gospel. We do not pretend to say how it is possible for some to choose life and for others to choose death. But freedom, morality, probation, essentially involve this possibility of contrary choice. The moral evolution of character is due to the soul's turning to God, as He is revealed in duty and in grace, or to its turning away from God. Salvation is of God's will; sin is not of God's will—least of all the sin of rejecting Christ. Their destruction, if any souls ultimately perish, must be by God's permission, and must subserve God's glory, but cannot possibly be of the counsel of God's will, as salvation is. This, however, ought rather to be discussed in connection with the doctrine of election.

X.

In the doctrine of election or predestination we carry back the history of the world, and especially the history of redemption, to their roots in the purpose of God Almighty, who worketh all in all. But, in this earthly life, we see only fragments of God's plan; and therefore we must beware of framing inadequate conceptions of the great God. More than this: God is revealed to us so far as He pleases to reveal Himself, and in such aspects as He pleases. First, perhaps, He is revealed as almighty power; then as a moral lawgiver:

then He is revealed as drawing nearer to us, in reward and punishment. But we do not truly know God till we know Him as a redemptive power. That is to say, God reveals Himself to us as the strength of moral endeavour, coming to us graciously in Christ, with forgiveness for our sin, and with efficient help against temptation, adapting His moral gifts so as they must be constituted if they are to avail for the sinful. Now this is what conscience and Scripture unwearingly set before us as the true and relevant manifestation of God. Nature is the work of God's will; moral law is a disclosure of God's will; but the will in man to do right is the personal purpose for good of God Almighty Himself. Not if it stops short at legalism and self-righteousness. But if it goes on to humility, to repentance, to trust in a Divine power greater and better than ourselves—then, I say, the good will is God in us, dwelling in us by His Spirit.

Now, we are not entitled to alter our conceptions of God in obedience to supposed intellectual necessities. We may insist that everything which happens is, in a sense, due to God's will; and we may, by following that line of thought, come to conceive of God as bare omnipotence. But there are mysteries in God which we cannot expect to fathom; and both wisdom and reverence bid us think of God as He has taught us to do,—as the righteous One, and the creator of righteousness in our hearts.

It is not, then, merely on account of the Christian doctrine of man that we insist upon a Christian doctrine of God, interpreting God not fundamentally as omnipotence, but as righteousness and love. That is the Christian revelation itself. Yet it is true that the doctrine of man prepares us for a moral doctrine of redemption. The doctrine of man unfallen teaches us that God has called into being a separate finite will. So long as the will of the creature is in harmony with God, this potential dualism may remain potential. But, when sin enters the world, the dualism becomes actual. Sin is not of God's making. Even the Westminster Confession feels constrained

to affirm that God *permitted* the fall (vi. § 1). Of course we may be jeeringly asked wherein the permission of Omnipotence differs from constraint. But we do not pretend to explain such mysteries. Only we cling to the revelation of God in our moral consciousness; and it teaches us that we are with God, the omnipotent God, in fighting against sin. We see, therefore, that God's fore-ordination embraces a sphere in which we can only define God's will as permissive. To this sphere all evil belongs. We see that God's moral government, as we know it in this world, includes a multitude of wills distinct from God's own, and partly independent of Him, who are either finding their way back to God, or setting themselves against Him. By what reason are we to make the sphere of redemption one of arbitrary sovereignty? If God is moral in permitting and judging evil, He is also moral in redeeming from it. If men are free in non-moral acts, or in the sin which destroys themselves, they are surely not less free in yielding themselves to God.

We believe, therefore, in God's election of grace, because God is revealed to us as the God of the good will and of redemption. But we disbelieve in God's decree of reprobation—*because* God is revealed to us as the source of the will for good, and as the God of redemption. Nor do we trust irreverent and inhuman syllogisms in such a region as this. If we encounter mysteries here, they are only what we should expect.

How different the result of the mechanical conception of grace! According to it, God is an infinite Will. There is no revealed character in God; or rather the revealed character of God—His legal righteousness—is man's eternal enemy. Our hope is to escape from God's character. God might have left us to perish—*ecce signum*, He has left multitudes to perish. The Atonement does not reveal anything in God higher than penal justice, for it is dominated by the requirements of penal law, and its extent is arbitrarily limited. The Calvinist worships a God of legality, or a God of force, or a God

unknown. Or rather, if he worships the Father through Christ, he does so in the very teeth of his system.

XI.

We shall now consider some objections that may be urged against our criticism of the Calvinistic system as a whole.

The first which I shall notice arises out of a remark by Dr. James Candlish, in his interesting little handbook on the *Christian Doctrine of God*.¹ 'If the possibility of sin,' he says, 'is essentially involved in free agency, it would follow that sin must always be possible for moral agents, that even creatures who have for long obeyed God's will may at any moment transgress, and those who have sinned, but have repented and returned to obedience, must always be in danger of falling away. . . . But . . . the Bible speaks of God keeping men from falling. . . . It seems therefore clear that, according to Scripture, God can, through the grace of Christ, secure the obedience and holiness of men, in perfect consistency with their freedom and responsibility as rational and moral agents. This is the essential principle of the Augustinian or Calvinistic theology; and it is all that need be asserted on this point, in order to a consistent maintenance of the entire Calvinistic system as laid down by the Synod of Dort.'

Now, in the first place, I would submit that, even if Dr. Candlish's modification of Calvinism is a logical success, one is entitled to study the system for purposes of criticism in the official standards of the Calvinistic Churches.

Secondly, there is surely no difficulty in suggesting a *tertium quid* between Dr. Candlish's two positions. 'The possibility of sin' may be 'essentially involved in free agency' *during a state of probation*, and yet *non posse peccare* may be part of the promised reward. Still further, it may be invariably, or at least normally, through a course of moral discipline that God anneals the souls of His servants to a heroic temper 'in perfect consistency with their freedom and responsibility.' I take it,

¹ Pp. 99, 100.

that is what almost all Christian moralists believe. For my own part, I cannot imagine in what the freedom of an untried finite will consists, if it does not include the possibility of sinning. Yet, while this is so, Origen's idea of eternal mutability is not likely to satisfy the deeper instincts of any heart. In other words, formal freedom will be the presupposition and antecedent of material or real freedom; and we should beware of opposing them to each other.—By the way, from our point of view, it is absolutely impossible that men should attain to 'obedience and holiness,' except through God's grace, and not less impossible that men should be brought to salvation in any fashion inconsistent with 'their freedom and responsibility as rational and moral agents.'

But is Dr. Candlish's position covered by the denial of eternal mutability in the will of the redeemed? Or does not his doctrine, that God 'secures' the salvation of individuals, involve the irresistibility of grace, its inamissibility, the inefficiency of the common operations of the Holy Spirit, and God's 'sovereign' arbitrariness? In that case you may, if you like, allege that grace is 'consistent' with the freedom of the saved, but you postulate the deadness in trespasses and sins—the unfreedom, as Germans would say—of all post-Adamic mankind. Therefore you evacuate of all meaning the moral process of history. And no less do you evacuate of meaning the moral process of sanctification. If God, so to speak, can and does make men perfect in holiness with a wave of His hand, then the life of sanctification becomes a 'mystery.' Thus do all moral forces and processes become mysterious, because empty of meaning, when Calvinism introduces its reckless appeal to omnipotence.

We accept then the Arminian doctrine, that 'God blesses as many as He can.' That is to say; in this mysterious region, God reveals Himself primarily and most clearly as a God who delights in mercy, and who laments over the stubbornness of the sinner's will. But surely it is not fair to say that, according to Arminianism, 'there are some whom, from the nature of

free agency, God cannot bless.' Is it not rather that from their abuse of free agency God cannot bless them? 'The moral power of self-sacrificing love' (p. 100) is fitted to tell upon the will of man; and may not God, even from an Arminian's point of view, count upon the effect of Christ's sacrifice as 'securing' the eternal salvation of many? God is revealed as securing salvation for men, in spite of their former sin. But God is nowhere revealed as securing salvation irrespectively of our moral condition. [As to those who 'are perishing,' my contention is, that we need not and ought not to dogmatise on their ultimate destiny, and that we have no revealed materials which could enable us to say how their guilt is related to God's will, otherwise than as He permits it, is grieved by it, visits it upon them, and overrules it to His glory.]

A second statement made in defence of Calvinism is, that it does not tell against the justice of God more than the admitted facts of God's natural providence do.¹ If this were true, the defence, instead of saving revealed religion, might destroy natural religion. But it is untrue. The facts of providence are the same for every observer; but Calvinistic theory has the peculiar infamy of making providence no less odious than grace. Other Christians explain God's providence as a moral process. We do not assert that God is working by the only possible means, for God is very mysterious, and very great; but we know that God is wise,—that His omnipotence is self-limited for certain purposes,—that to this fact we owe our knowledge of Him and power to co-operate with Him,—and that, in His moral wisdom, God rules the whole course of history for the sake of 'one far-off Divine event.' And if, on the march, any stumble, they do not stumble that they should fall; God forbid; but rather that through their fall they themselves, or others, or both, may ultimately rise to higher things. God has not divested Himself of His omnipotence, or mortgaged it in any way; He is still and always God and

¹ Hodge, vol. ii. p. 349.

not man; He is high and lifted up above all our thoughts of Him. There is a mystery here,—a paradox, if you will. But the primary revelation of God is the revelation of a righteous and loving purpose, subjecting itself to moral conditions; and the revelation of omnipotent power is only secondary. That is Christianity in a single sentence. The Calvinist however can have none of this. His God works without conditions (except the one condition that He must work in harmony with His own penal law). He works omnipotently, irresistibly. We are in a world of chance, where, as Lucretius says, anything may produce anything. Evil, like good, flows directly from God's will.

And so, too, of grace. Here again the facts are the same for all Christians, but the Calvinistic explanation has peculiar aggravations. If human souls are ultimately lost to God and righteousness, other Christians will bow in humble, heart-broken submission, knowing that, while even the lost cannot be outside of the purpose or government of God, they perish, in the deepest sense, by their own act, and in spite of God's grace. There is a moral process in human probation which grace itself implies and cannot set aside. But the Calvinist is shut up, at every point, to affirm that the non-elect perish from no motive or cause except God's distinct preference that they should perish. It is not from want of an all-sufficient salvation; for, as the Calvinist will tell you, there is merit enough in Christ to redeem ten thousand worlds. It is not even from the dreadful motive, that God may furnish Himself with victims for the display of His penal justice. *Ex hypothesi*, the cross of Jesus Christ displays even the penal justice of God far more gloriously and wonderfully than ten thousand hells could do. It is not from the sinner's want of will; no sinner is saved otherwise than in spite of himself. And yet God does not leave non-elect sinners alone. He plays with His victims. He sends them *bona fide* offers of a gospel which, by His sovereign appointment, is not for them; He admits them to 'some common operations of the Spirit,' to

vague yearnings and impulses towards better things, by which they 'cannot be saved'—by which God knows that they cannot be saved,—by which God does not mean that they should be saved,—but by which, as involving a greater degree of light and outward privilege, it is God's purpose, through a detestable piece of Calvinistic logic, to damn the non-elect more deeply than ever. Such is the Calvinistic theory of God's providence and of His grace towards the non-elect. Such things men have dared to attribute to God: They are not written in any corner, by any irresponsible fanatic; they are part of the professed faith of every Presbyterian preacher and elder in Scotland. *In hoc signo vincent.* When I think of these things, I do not wonder that infidels have sometimes accused the Christian Church of worshipping an infinite demon. Though an apostle or an angel from heaven were to announce these things as true, one could only answer, Let him be accursed.

Another defence against our criticism of Calvinism is that it is 'founded upon human ignorance.' 'We are incapable,' says Dr. Hodge, 'of understanding the perfect consistency of God's sovereignty and control with the free agency and responsibility of his rational creatures. . . . Men act as freely in religion as they do in any department of life; and, when they perish, it is the work of their own hands.'¹ In other words,—so this statement is often put,—religion is a mystery, and therefore we dare not criticise the Calvinistic scheme.

As to that, one is tempted to ask, Why did you not think of the mysteriousness of religion a little sooner? Could you not have regulated your own conduct by it? What right have you to assume that mysteriousness forbids further use of intellect just here, where intellect begins to criticise your system? The Bible contains no systems of doctrine. Systems spring up, and systems wither away; they are broken lights of God; but, both before and after, the Bible blooms in perennial youth. Certainly, we need doctrinal systems; but they are of human

¹ Vol. ii. pp. 350, 351.

manufacture, and cannot be clad with the sacred authority which belongs to the directly religious word of God. No one compelled you to make a system. If logic supplies you with a scaffolding, to enable you to build a prison for the human spirit, it may furnish me with a crowbar, to enable me to knock your prison down. 'When an objection is shown to prove too much, it is rationally refuted.'¹ Quite so.

More explicitly; Dr. Hodge's statement, we are compelled to maintain, shows ignorance or forgetfulness of his own system; and so does this apology in the mouth of any Calvinist. We have already pointed out that the Calvinistic doctrine of unfallen man involves all the mystery of the joint operation of Divine will and human freedom. And yet the assertion of that mystery does not involve the Calvinistic doctrine of grace. Nor can we directly transfer that mystery to the state of fallen man, as described by Calvinism. According to Calvinism, sin implies the loss of freedom. The doctrine of the human slave-will is, as we have seen, a special assertion, lying well on this side of the mysterious region where Divine and human wills co-operate. The whole moral destiny of non-elect mankind was determined by the first sin (and the first sin only²) of Adam (and not Eve²), for a covenant was made with Adam not only for himself but also for his posterity. Adam became guilty and spiritually dead, because he abused his freedom; we are born guilty and spiritually dead, because of the provisions of the covenant. God is righteous, who taketh vengeance—because of the provisions of that covenant. No one, it is supposed, could be saved by grace, unless mankind were dead in sin. To say, then, that 'the sovereign disposition of God is consistent with the freedom and responsibility of human agents,' is beyond the mark. It is true, but irrelevant. The free being in this case is Adam;

¹ Hodge, vol. ii. p. 349.

² *Ib.* 224. Had Eve a special covenant of works for herself? or was Eve condemned, not for her own sin, but for the sin of Adam? I do not think Dr. Hodge has explained this.

the responsible beings are Adam's hapless posterity. We have here an exaggerated doctrine of sin, drawn up without any regard to the conditions of moral responsibility. If you assert that individual freedom plays a part in determining human destiny,—you are no longer a Calvinist; you are 'unsound' upon imputation; you do not believe that man is spiritually 'dead'; you cease to explain his absolute dependence on God's grace by his condition of guilt and sin; you have no theology left. When we find Dr. Hodge making this blunder, we infer that even he was beginning faintly to suspect the immoral character of his system. No doubt Calvinists will always be fond of urging God's greatness as a reason for accepting their scheme. That is perhaps the point upon which they have most to say for themselves. But the greatness of God does nothing to prove the mystery of guilt and substitution. It does not help to explain that one man should be morally free, and all the rest of mankind morally helpless from their birth, yet responsible. Augustinianism tells us not merely that God is powerful, but that man is impotent. To affirm God's omnipotence along with man's freedom may be wise, though mysterious; I think it is; but that is not Calvinism. To affirm man's impotence along with man's freedom is an abuse of language. Its natural tendency is to produce absolute scepticism—to make men despair of discovering truth. If Christians could be induced to look closely at this last refuge of Calvinism, they would surely see its untenable character, and we might hope for the dawn of better things.

In point of fact, while there is great mystery in God's dealings with His reasonable creatures, there is no mystery at all in Calvinism. It carries out its mechanical conception of grace with merciless and relentless precision. Men tolerate it, out of reverence for the mysteries of providence; but it is itself clear and shallow and heartless. If you can accept, instead of the Christian God of love, a God of ingenious calculating self-interest,—if you can accept, instead of the moral discipline of life, the mechanical jerk of 'irresistible' grace,—if you can accept,

instead of the deep things of the Spirit, a bundle of arbitrary legal fictions,—if you can make its assumptions, you will find nothing in the development of Calvinism to give you pause for a moment. It translates the wonders of grace into an ignoble and incredible fable. But its imaginary world is perfectly self-consistent. The game is played according to the laws of the game—with human souls for counters. Morality is ruled out, since ‘morality is not grace’; but every supposed region above morality is simple immorality. We know God as the righteous one, as a gracious holy will, dealing with us as living wills made in His image; otherwise we cannot know God. The only mystery about Calvinism is, that men should ever have received it as the authentic doctrine of the God and Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

And what is the practical recommendation that earnest Calvinists base on the alleged mysteriousness—*i.e.* on the moral repulsiveness—of so-called religious truth? What, but that we should ignore it? Act, they say, as if God had not predestined everything. These are truths, they say, with which you have nothing to do. You are an ignorant being, they tell you; you could not live if you pictured your own future; take chance of eternal life as you take chance of success in business,—if either of them comes to you, it will come to you along the lines of certain psychological and practical activities—not along the line of fatalistic dreams.

And this is reverence! this is the theology of reconciliation! O Calvinist, God did not reveal Himself in order that men might ignore His revelations! Christ is the light of the world—not the light of the Synod of Dort! One difficulty in dealing with careless and irreligious people is to make them treat spiritual truth seriously. They persist in regarding it as mere conventional talk. Themselves insincere, they think that God is ‘altogether such an one as themselves.’ And now you come forward, and tell us that we are bound first to receive your corpus of Calvinistic divinity, and secondly to ignore it, and act as if it were false. Christ is the truth; is He the truth

then in some non-natural sense? You must accept His doctrines; yes, certainly; but are you sure that this reserve fund of irrelevant and dangerous truth is really Christ's? Or is it something that your own mistaken intellect has first devised, and then imputed to the Master? It is true that man must needs be ignorant of the future; but why? Simply that he may be free indeed to play his own part in shaping his future. Hence, Hebrew prophecy, unlike Pagan oracles, unlike Calvinistic theology, had a moral element in it; if any nation 'against whom God had pronounced, turned from their evil, He repented of the evil that He thought to do unto them.' Pagan foreknowledge of the future is a paralysing fate; God's revelation is a living moral help, suited to our necessities. But what does an unfree being want with ignorance of the future? Is it part of the will of God to cheat the redeemed, or to cheat the lost, with an illusion of freedom, while all are alike dead in sin and His grace is irresistible? Doubtless, the only psychological way, in which men can be led towards duty or towards faith, is to believe that it is really possible for them to perform duty, to attain to faith. That is a strong argument for believing in human freedom. Is it any argument for encouraging the illusion of freedom in the dead? Is not such a thought nauseous?

Doubtless again, in God's real world of free and responsible, though sinful men, we cannot trace out how the Divine will accomplishes itself through us, or without us, or in spite of us. Yet we know that God reigns. We act in the faith that He reigns, though we confess that His judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out. Therefore we do our own part; we trust in God *and* keep our powder dry. But you cannot transfer this conception to the sham world where living responsible souls are dead in sin. The harmony of human and Divine causation is unthinkable, where the two are *a priori* out of relation and hostile to each other. You cannot apply that harmony to the world of grace, if grace presupposes the mutilation of man's nature as a result of Adam's first sin.

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Under grace, as you conceive it, the law holds, Either God works, or man ; where God's causation begins, man's ceases. Notice too that the general faith in God, under which a Christian plays his little part, is impossible for the 'seeking sinner.' God is *not* his friend ; God's revealed character is hostile to him ; if, in the unknown future, salvation reaches him, it will come by a sudden miracle, standing in no real relation to his life up till conversion. Is it on the chance of that miracle that he is to hug his ignorance, and put out of his mind the limitation of redemption ? Are *these* the glad tidings of great joy ?

Another venturesome defence of Calvinism is found in the statement, that no other theology represents God as a free being. The denial of God's sovereignty in the appointment of salvation and damnation, righteousness and sin, is said to involve a denial that God is free.

The direct answer to this statement we have already had to make more than once. For this, like several previous objections, ignores the distinction between the original moral constitution of the world and its constitution since the Fall. No doubt some hard-driving Calvinists have represented the probation even of Adam as a fiasco and a sham. But the Westminster Confession, with which we are specially concerned, recognises the freedom of Adam. God, we are told, 'permitted' his fall ; and the Shorter Catechism adds, that our first father was 'left to the freedom of his own will.' Hence : if God's freedom involves arbitrary disposal of the moral state and future lot of God's reasonable creatures, then God was not a free being before the fall of man. Conversely : if God was a free being before the Fall, we do not dishonour His freedom by insisting on the laws under which He administers, then or now, His moral government.

But this point ought to be somewhat expanded. May it not be, some will ask, that Calvinism conceives God as a will, while other theologies conceive Him as a law or as a character ? Perhaps the different representations are equally justifiable in

their own place ; perhaps they are all needed for a full view of the truth.—In point of fact, they are incompatible with each other ; but let that pass.

Now we have seen that the moral circumstances of our lot give us reason to believe that, in the case of created wills, formal freedom is an antecedent and condition of real freedom. Hence contingency, or, if you like (a limited) 'sovereignty' is the outermost wrapping of true freedom, as it is developed in creaturely wills. But the 'truth' of freedom is not the process but the result—only reached through the process ; freedom is 'reason willing reason,' man doing the will of God from the heart. If then we transfer sovereignty to God most free, we create a false God in the likeness of our own hearts. We ascribe the process to God, in whom the result of moral development is eternally real,—who is exalted above all finite process, though He unceasingly manifests and communicates Himself in the processes of His creation. It is not formal freedom but real freedom, so far as we attain to it, that assimilates us to God. We know Him as the will for good ; and He is free—He cannot but be free—because He is perfect holiness and perfect love. Hence any separation of will from character is entirely out of place. Will is either the manifestation or the making of character (where it is the making of character, as in man, it is also a manifestation of partially formed character ; character grows ; in the act of will it changes or develops). Therefore the will of God, the eternal and most perfect one, is nothing else than His character in operation. And the law of God is a partial and initial revelation of the personal God, who is character—who is righteous and loving purpose. Unquestionably, in the manifoldness of His works, we cannot affirm that God's character always necessitates His choosing that path for the outgoing of His power of which He actually does make choice. Such an assertion would be meaningless. There may be Divine contingencies of choice in the universe. But, wherever there is a better and a worse, God, because He is God, necessarily chooses

the better. 'He cannot deny Himself.' His freedom is the highest and holiest necessity. God is *Himself* in being righteousness and love. Freedom is to be (or, in a creature, to become) one's-self. Contingency in moral matters—to do what one likes because one likes—is the empty form of will without rational content=sin in the abstract.

Another answer that will be made to our criticisms is that we are attacking the Bible,—that there is Calvinistic language in the Bible. Of course there is. But there is ten times more of anti-Calvinistic language. I have elsewhere spoken of one confessedly predestinarian passage. And it might be possible to quote a few other phrases, such as some of the Old Testament anthropomorphisms, in which God appears as a sovereign will rather than as a moral purpose. But, in general, the Calvinistic language of Scripture, so to call it, merely expresses, either the guilt of sin, or the absoluteness of man's dependence as man upon God his Father. The truth revealed in Scripture is the character of God, and a plan, in keeping with the Divine character, for communicating grace to men. Saving faith is a belief in the one Father and the one Saviour. Subsequently, and incidentally, the Bible makes statements as to the grace of God which have a Calvinistic sound; but, if we interpret them intelligently, from the point of view of Christian faith as the principle of our own lives, we shall see that these statements are only reiterated confessions of human guilt, and reiterated praises of God's power and mercy. The whole evolution of Bible doctrine must have been different if God had been minded to reveal Calvinism. The book is full of arguments, appeals, assurances, which earnest Calvinists never dare to touch.

It is a dangerous thing to hint that Calvinists do not really maintain all the enormities of their professed system. One remembers how the late Mr. Maurice—a rather provoking controversialist, no doubt—drew on himself the sharpest of

the late Principal Candlish's fire by dropping such a hint. Nevertheless, I shall dare to repeat the statement, that modern Calvinists, unlike their sturdier ancestors, have no great love for their system ; that they only want to maintain a belief in the evil of sin, and in the efficacy and freedom of grace ; and that their Calvinism is languidly advocated because it is supposed to be the only logically correct method of stating and defending these Christian truths. Every one must know that Calvinistic doctrine is more and more ignored by preachers. Those who profess it have a great many plans for deadening its influence on their minds—plans which have the bad effect of confirming worldly men in the impression that theological and religious statements, however sonorous, do not mean anything definite. And when one produces, even out of Church standards, any of the extreme statements of orthodox doctrine, one causes a quite unreasonable irritation in orthodox circles.

But surely salvation is not to be found in laying down Calvinistic premises and then refusing to draw Calvinistic conclusions. If you only lock the cupboard containing the skeleton, in order to keep it out of sight, the house will be haunted still. By ignoring a difficulty you do not get rid of it. As long as man's dependence on grace is alleged to be due to sin, so long shall we be harassed by outbreaks of the mechanical theory of grace. But, if shy and reluctant Calvinists would drop their professed system, admit that they are in perplexity, assert the central religious truths of sin and grace, and wait for light—men would honour and God would bless them. In this essay there is offered, if they like to call it so, an apparatus of split hairs, to enable them to separate the religious truths of the gospel from the immoral Calvinistic logic with which these truths have been too much associated.

But, at the same time, we cannot admit that men are morally justified in professing Calvinism until they construct a new and 'safe' systematic theology. Disproved or undisproved, the moral implications of Calvinism are very shocking. They ought to create repulsion ; they do create repulsion in the

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